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CHURCH OF THE
Church of England

The Church of England, being the only
true Church in this Kingdom, which is
the only true Church in the world, and
the only true Church in the Kingdom of
Heaven.

Printed by J. H. St. John, at the
Printers Office, in St. Pauls Church-yard,
1704.



The Principels of a Church of England Gentle
Woman ~~are~~ ^{written} by one Mrs. Astel, a Person
of Learning and Piety; She teaches a School
of Charity Girls erected some few years ago,
by the Lady Catherine Jones Daughter of the
late Earl of Ranelagh, and some other devout
Rigides de l'Eglise Anglicane, as the Editor of
the French Gazette used to call our High Churchmen
or Torrys, and accordingly you wil find a Tincture
of that Spirit in the said Book, which is otherwise
~~was~~ very good. Mr. Ch. John Chamberlaine
in his private lettre to me from the 19. Febr.
1714.

THE
Christian Religion,
As Profess'd by a
DAUGHTER
OF THE
Church of *England*.

Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the Old Paths, where is the good Way, and walk therein, and ye shall find Rest for your Souls. Jer. 6. 16.

L O N D O N:

Printed by S. H. for R. Wilkin, at the
King's-Head in St. Paul's-Church-Yard,
1705.

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THE
Christian Religion

As Prescribed by a

DAUGHTER

OF THE

Church of England.

Two parts the first, second &c. in the year and
for, and are for the Old Testament, which is the
good Word, and mark the way, and in the
first part for your souls. For 6. 10.

L O W D O W

Printed by S. H. for R. Wallis, at the
King's Head in St. Paul's Church-yard.

1707. 18



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E R R A T A.

The Reader is desired to pardon lesser Faults, and to correct these.

PAge 38. Line ult. for Government, r. Perswade.
p. 47. l. 24. add as. p. 50. l. 19. r. Manner.
p. 97. l. 7. r. in. p. 149. l. 24. r. Indifferency.
p. 170. l. 27. r. he is. p. 178. l. 28. r. write. p.
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p. 296. l. 7. r. Oeconomy. p. 304. l. 12. for Self,
r. Life. l. 16. dele But. p. 321. l. 2. r. it. p.
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the. p. 384. l. 6. r. none. p. 406. l. 4. for is, r.
was.

T H E

THE
Christian Religion,
As Profess'd by a
DAUGHTER
OF THE
Church of England.

In a Letter to the Right Honourable,

*The Lady Catherine Jones, Daughter of the late Earl
of Ranelagh*

SECT. I.

M A D A M,

I. **W**HEN I borrow'd *The Ladies Religion*, your Ladiship
I believe had no suspicion
of being troubled with such a long Ad-
dress, nor had I any design to give you
this trouble: Tho' if there be any thing
peculiar in a *Lady's Religion*, to distinguish
it from that of other Christians, a Wo-
man

man I shou'd think is as like to be acquainted with that peculiarity as a Man. But I suppose, *Madam*, that the Religion which every one but your Self concludes you practise with a Primitive Piety, is neither more nor less than what was formerly Taught and Practis'd by *St. Peter* and *St. Paul*, &c. and is still by all Orthodox Guides and truly Christian People. For tho' the Press has help'd us to the Religion of a *Physician*, a *Layman*, a *Gentleman*, and a *Lady*, yet in my poor opinion, they have all of them but one Religion if they are Christians. There are some peculiar Duties indeed, suited to their several conditions of Life, which so far as they relate to a Gentleman and to a Lady, are very Piously and Ingeniously describ'd, by an excellent Author in the *Gentleman's and Lady's Calling*, who does not suppose that they are to have different Religions; for their Creed must be the same and their Practice in the main, if they hope for the same End, even the Salvation of their Souls.

2. But if the *Letter* does not suppose that a Lady's Religion is different from that of other People, then it is to be suppos'd the meaning is, that what is contain'd in that Letter is Religion enough for a Lady, and according to the *French Prefacer*, for every body; for he calls it

an excellent Portraiture of the Christian Religion. It is said to be writ *by a Divine of the Church of England*; and my Catechism has taught me *to submit my self to my Teachers and Spiritual Pastors.* But since they don't require a blind Obedience; since the *Bereans* are commended for refusing to take the Doctrine even of an Apostle upon Trust; and because St. Peter wou'd have us *ready to give a Reason of the hope that is in us*; the making a Confession of my Faith, and such a modest Examination of that Letter as this will lead me unto, whilst I compare it with the Word of GOD, the only infallible Guide, can't justly be reckoned a going beyond my Sphere. I shall therefore presume so far on your Ladiship's Patience, as to tell you what I think a Woman *ought* to Believe and Practise, and consequently what she *may*. That she may have it in Theory, is evident from a Woman's writing this; and whoever wou'd be convinc'd that the Practice may be equal to the Theory, need only turn their Eyes to a Lady that I cou'd name, wou'd your Ladiship give me leave.

3. I pretend not to Dictate to any, leaving this to Spirits more Magisterial even than mine, because 'tis like they think themselves more Illuminated, and

therefore cannot bear a dissent from their Opinions. My Design is only to tell your Ladiship my Thoughts, they are at the Service of such as like them, and those who dislike are as welcome to Reject them. For as I know of none but my Lawful Governours in Church and State, who have a right to judge for me in any Case, and therefore they only shall do it: So on the other hand, I shou'd be very unjust if I deny'd to others a Liberty I think fit to take. For to pretend to Dictate to our Fellow-Rational Creatures, (whether directly, or which is worse, because it makes them the greater *Dupes*, by all the artifice of a feigned Modesty and seeming Humility) unless where G O D has given a special Commission and Authority to Command, is an assuming of His Prerogative, and an usurpation upon their Just and Natural Rights, who have as much Right to abound in their own Sense, as we have to abound in ours. And to submit to such Dictates is an Affront to G O D, by despising or at the best neglecting the Talents He has given us, and a direct disobedience to that Command of Christ's, *Call no Man master upon Earth*; that is, Follow no Man's Judgment or Authority any farther than as he brings his Credentials from the Great Master who

who is in Heaven. Were other People to Answer for us in the next World, they might reasonably expect to judge for us in this. But since *we must all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ; and every one of us shall give an Account of himself to GOD*, and must *stand or fall to his own Master*; it is as unreasonable to take upon us to *Judge for*, as it is to *Judge another's Servant*. God never requires us to submit our Judgments to our Fellow-Creatures, except in cases wherein He makes them, and not us, answerable for the Error and all its evil Consequences. And we may observe, if we please, That a Man never sets up himself to be any ones Oracle or Director, but out of some Selfish and Base Design.

4. But then if we wou'd Judge to purpose, we must free our selves from Prejudice and Passion, must examine and prove all things, and not give our assent till forc'd to do so by the evidence of Truth. And when we are sure we have found the Truth, we ought to stick to it with an heroick Constancy and immovable Resolution; which is a valour that does not misbecome a Woman, let it be nick-nam'd Pride or Obstinacy, or what Folks please. For without it we can never be good Christians, we are hardly Rational Creatures, but shall be *blown about*

with every wind of Doctrine, by the cunning craftiness of those who lie in wait to Deceive.

5. If GOD had not intended that Women shou'd use their Reason, He wou'd not have given them any, for He does nothing in vain. If they are to use their Reason, certainly it ought to be employ'd about the noblest Objects, and in business of the greatest Consequence, therefore in Religion. That our God-fathers and God-mothers answer'd for us at the Font, was an act of Charity in them, and will be a great Benefit to us if we make a right use of it; but it will be *our* Condemnation if we are Christians merely upon this account, for that only can be imputed to a free Agent which is done with Understanding and Choice. A Christian Woman therefore must not be a *Child in Understanding*; she must serve GOD with *Understanding* as well as with *Affection*, must love Him *with all her Mind and Soul*, as well as *with all her Heart and Strength*; in a word, must perform a *reasonable Service* if she means to be acceptable to her Maker.

6. I am a Christian then, and a member of the Church of *England*, not because I was Born in *England*, and Educated by Conforming Parents, but because I have, according to the best of my Understanding,

derstanding, and with some application and industry, examin'd the Doctrine and Precepts of Christianity, the Reasons and Authority on which it is built. I say Authority, because, tho' Reason will never permit me to submit to any mere Humane Authority, yet there is not any thing more Reasonable than to submit entirely to that Authority, which I find upon a strict enquiry, has all the evidences that Reason can ask, to prove that it is Divine. Reason is that light which G O D himself has set up in my mind to lead me to Him, I will therefore follow it so far as it can conduct me. And as for further Illumination, as it wou'd be the height of folly and a great injury to my self to reject it, so it wou'd be the utmost ingratitude to Almighty G O D not to be thankful for it. Let me see then how far Reason can carry me, and next what further light G O D has been pleas'd to afford.

7. I can as soon question my own Being, as the Being of a G O D, for I am only because He is. And when I think of G O D, I can't possibly think Him to be any other than the most Perfect Being; a Being Infinite in all Perfections. We need not be told wherein Perfection consists, for let us be ever so sceptical, we must needs acknowledge, that

Acts 17.
27, 28.

Wisdom and Goodness, Justice and Holiness, are Perfections, and indeed the greatest Perfections, so that an intelligent Nature defective in these can't be perfect, but destitute of them must needs be miserable. Knowledge and Power without them wou'd not be beauties but blemishes; nor can a Being be infinitely Wise and Good, Just and Holy, unless He be also Omnipresent and Omnipotent. So that when I examine my Idea, or rather according to the Apostles expression, my Perception of GOD, *who is not far from every one of us, for in Him we Live, Move, and have our Being*, as the very Heathens own'd; I find that the notion I have of GOD, contains those and all other Perfections. Among which Self-existence is most remarkable, as being the original and basis of all the rest.

8. For if GOD deriv'd His Being from any but Himself, there must be something Greater and more Perfect than GOD, which is absurd, since GOD is by the supposition the most Perfect Being, and consequently Self-existing. Because there can be no Absolute and Infinite Perfection but where there is Self-existence; for from whence shall it be derived? And Self-existence is such a Perfection as necessarily includes all other Perfections. That there is a Self-existing Being

Being is evident to the meanest Understanding, for without it there cou'd have been no Men, no World, no Being at all; since that which once *was not*, cou'd never make it self: Nor can any Being communicate that to another which it has not it self. Therefore the Self-existing Being must contain all other Perfections, therefore it must be an Intelligent Being, and therefore it must be GOD. Hence I conclude, *That G O D only Is*, and that all Beings besides His, are only the mere Creatures of His Will.

9. Thus far, and even farther I might have gone, tho' I had never been instructed, never heard a word of Divinity; provided I had made a right use of my Reason, had withdrawn from the noise and hurry of the World, to apply myself to Serious reflections. For it must be a strange sort of Rational Creature that can live in such a beautiful Fabrick as we Inhabit, without thinking how it came here; and who was the Maker of the Universe.

10. Nay, had I been shut up in a den from my Infancy, if Reason had ever budded, I must have thought *what am I? and from whence had I my Being?* If I had been admitted to converse among my Fellow-Creatures, the next thought must have

have been, certainly I do not owe my Being to those who are as weak, as precarious as I am; Mankind must have had a Beginning, and there must be a last resort to a Self-existing Being. And this Being which is so liberal in its communications, must needs possess in the utmost Perfection all that good which it bestows.

11. The next Natural thought wou'd be, what Obligations am I under? what Acknowledgments am I to make to that Being from whom I hold my All? and who can certainly resume His Gift, whenever my Ingratitude makes it requisite? But since He gave me Being without my knowledge, much less desert, and upon no other motive but His own goodness, consequently this goodness intended I shou'd be happy; for I find He has planted in my Nature an incessant desire after happiness. But what is happiness? and how shall I attain it? I cannot but passionately desire that this Wise, this Good, this Communicative Being, wou'd be pleas'd to discover His Pleasure to me; for surely the only way to be happy, is, by conforming my self to His Will.

12. I find indeed a light in my Mind, directing me to the Author of my Being; making it necessary to Adore, to Love, to Devote my self to Him, if I wou'd
avoid

avoid the reproaches of my own Mind. How happy am I when thus employ'd ! how uneasy , how wretched when it is neglected ! But who is the Gainer by this Service ? Not this All-perfect Being, for there can be no addition to Infinite Perfection. 'Tis I only who get by it, I do what is fit, I answer the end of my Being, and oh that I might ever do so !

13. Ever ! what is that ? can I who had a Beginning, who am but of yesterday, presume that I shall have no End ? Why may not I suppose it ? since I find that I desire not only *Happiness*, but *Endless Happiness*, and that without any reproach from my Reason, which never fails to reproach me grievously for every improper and irregular desire. And since my Maker is goodness it self, far be it from me to think he wou'd have given me this desire, if he had intended to disappoint it. I may have some appetites which it may not be fit to gratifie, because the pursuit of them may be beneath the dignity of my Nature ; they may interfere with the Common Good ; it may not be for my true good to satisfy them, but much to my advantage to deny them, since it manifests the freedom and empire of my Mind, it gives me a Sacrifice to offer up to my Maker, by bowing my Will to His, and resigning my
Inclinations

Inclinations to my Reason: But the desire of Endless Happiness has no defect, it is conformable to Reason; surely then my Maker's Goodness design'd me an Endless Felicity; but what shall I do to attain it?

14. Reason that has led me thus far also tells me, That Mankind who are Creatures of the same Nature with my self, ought to be treated as my self, I shou'd be as solicitous for their happiness as for my own; for this is certainly the Will of our Maker, and it is thus that I wou'd have them deal with me. But is this sufficient to lead me to happiness? Alas they will neither do, nor receive the good I wish them! Jarring designs, and Angry passions, whence come ye? You can't proceed from the GOD of Order and Love. There is a charming harmony among Inanimate Creatures, whence is it that Man is the only dissonant String?

15. O that I had a more perfect and explicate knowledge of thy Ways, and of thy Will, thou Great and Good Author of my Being! shall I presume too much by Imploring it humbly and earnestly? Not but that I am infinitely oblig'd to Thee for Reason, which distinguishes me so much from the rest of thy Creatures: But neither my Body nor my Mind will endure
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to be always upon the stretch; I cannot always act up to that, which if I neglect, my Reason always bitterly reproaches me for it. O that thou wou'dst therefore take compassion on thy Creature, and impart to me more light and more strength, that I may fully Know, and always do thy Will O GOD!

16. I believe your Ladiship will agree with me, that tho' we had never heard of Religion, yet if we use our Reason at all, we must needs have such thoughts as these. Nor is it hard to give instances of Heathens, who if they have not thought in this very manner, have at least come pretty near it. But yet how far soever my own Reason may lead me, I will not refuse any assistance that is offer'd. Nay I will most gladly and thankfully receive every Divine Revelation. For certainly the Sun of Knowledge, the Light that enlightens every Man, the Supream and Universal Reason, must make greater discoveries than my feeble Taper can pretend to.

17. All I have to do is to enquire whether that which is call'd Divine Revelation, is so in reality, for thus far my own Reason is a proper judge. But when she is once satisfy'd that GOD has declar'd His Will, she has no more to do but humbly and readily to acquiesce

quiesce in what He has been pleas'd to reveal. For she who can't give me a full and satisfactory account of my own Nature, who can't inform me what are the ties that hold Body and Mind together, nor answer a hundred questions about matters of Fact, and things that are demonstrably True, shall she pretend to sit as sovereign Judge of the Reasonableness and Possibility of what GOD has Revealed? Wou'd she not be extravagantly impertinent and silly beyond measure, shou'd she pretend to comprehend the Divine Nature, and account for that Abyss of Perfection, whose Greatness confounds, and whose Light blinds her?

18. Reason can judge of things which she can comprehend, she can determine where she has a compleat, or at least a clear and distinct Idea, and can judge of *a contradiction in terms*, for this is within her compass; but she must not affirm in opposition to Revelation, that there is any *contradiction in the nature of things that are Infinitely above her*; nor deny a Truth because it is out of her reach. An *Indian*, or a *Ploughman*, may as peremptorily as he pleases, deny all the Propositions in *Euclid*, but they don't cease to be True, because the poor Ignorant does not understand them.

19. I am therefore to examine the Proofs that are brought for the Bibles being the Word of GOD, and if I can but find as good evidence that this is what it pretends to be, as I can have of any other Ancient Book or Fact; that Holy Men of old spake and writ as they were Inspir'd; and that GOD has own'd and set His Seal to their Testimony; I have no more to do but firmly to Believe, and carefully to Practise all that it enjoins. But if there be fuller and clearer evidence that the Bible contains a Religion revealed and attested by Divine Authority, than there is of any other Fact whatsoever, if then I disbelieve it, or if professing to believe it, I neglect to conform my self to it in all things, I don't deserve to be disputed with, I ought first to be put into *Bedlam* and brought to my sober Senses, e're I can be thought capable of a rational Conviction.

20. If I can prove the Old Testament to be the Word of GOD, this proof, together with the Facts that are mention'd in History, concerning *JESUS* of *Nazareth* and His Disciples, and which no sober Person can reasonably doubt of, sufficiently proves the New. So again reciprocally, the proof of the New Testament proves the Old, *that* referring so often

often to *this*, as to a Book writ by Divine Authority. And therefore, not to say all that this subject is capable of, I shall only tell your Ladship what it is that satisfies me, that the New Testament is the Word of GOD. Or which is the same thing, a Divine Law promulg'd to Mankind, to which GOD requires their obedience under the highest Penalties.

21. It is not to be doubted but that GOD can if He pleases Reveal His Will by a supernatural Influence, either upon the Mind of every particular Person, or else upon the Minds of certain Men by whom He thinks fit to convey it to others. I shall not enlarge so much as to shew why GOD has not taken the first way, if it can be prov'd that GOD has indeed done the other, His making choice of this way, sufficiently proves it to be the best, and most becoming the Divine Majesty. For tho' it will not follow that GOD has done so or so, because we presume that this is best; yet when we have clear evidence as to matter of Fact that GOD has acted thus and thus, we may then safely and justly conclude that this is best, because GOD always does what most becomes Him, and it is the Perfection of His Nature to do always, and freely, that which is absolutely and entirely the Best.

22. By

22. By what was said above we may discern, how very desirable it is that GOD shou'd reveal His Will more particularly than Natural Reason can attain unto it. Not but that Reason is one sort and degree of Divine Revelation, for it is from the Father of Lights that we derive our Illumination of any kind. So that Reason may not improperly be called a natural and universal Revelation; and those further manifestations of GOD's Will which we usually term Revelation, may justly enough be said to be a supernatural and improv'd Reason. There being a difference between Reason and Revelation, such as is between the less and the more, but no sort of Opposition in any respect. Reason being the Candle of the Lord set up in every ones heart, Revelation that broad Day-light which appear'd in due time and season.

23. No body will be so absurd as to deny that it is the indispensable duty of all reasonable Persons to conform themselves entirely to GOD's Will, so soon as they can be inform'd of it. Not one of us poor Worms, who agree with our Fellow-worms for his Service, in consideration of the Food and Money we give him for a season, wou'd endure to have our Commands disputed; we can't then

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be so audacious as to dispute our Makers. So that for the better colour to our Disobedience, we pretend that GOD has not given us those Commands which we do not care to Obey. Why we do not care to obey them, is a question indeed that Reason can never answer, any further than thus: That there are many sorts of Madmen, abundantly more than *Bedlam* can hold, every one of which has his particular *Resvery*. And tho' Reason is the same in every one, and so far as we follow it, we all act alike, yet Taste and Fancy are not to be accounted for or disputed, they are as various as our Faces, and when they are pursued will lead us into all extravagancies.

24. But since it is our *duty* to obey Divine Revelation, we are sure that GOD does not oblige us to any thing either impossible or unreasonable, consequently there must be some determinate Characters whereby we may distinguish Divine Revelation from all pretences to it. Evidences, which tho' they are not irresistible, because GOD having made us free Agents, can't be suppos'd to destroy His own work; yet are sufficient to convince all reasonable Persons, who examine them as the weight of the matter, and their own personal Interest in it requires. If then the Christian Religion

gion as delivered in the New Testament, has all those characters and evidences, it must needs be received as Divine; since it can never consist with the Justice and Goodness, the Wisdom and Holiness of GOD, to give His testimony to an Imposture; or which is the same thing, to leave us without sufficient Light to distinguish it from the Truth.

25. Yet be this Light ever so bright in it self, and sufficient for conviction, it is not to be suppos'd that it will have any effect on those who advise only with their Libertine Inclinations, or their wild Fancies and extravagant Humours, for these are unaccountable, and are to be laugh'd at, and not argu'd with. But if any sober Man or Woman, seriously consult their Reason, laying aside Prejudice, (as they must not only in this, but in every other case if they wou'd come at Truth) and especially those indispositions they have contracted by their Vices, there is no question to be made, but they will find it highly reasonable to believe that the Holy Scriptures are the Word of GOD.

26. Thus then I proceed: Having implor'd the Divine Assistance, I read my Bible with Attention and Reverence, and consider it carefully, and I find nothing there that offends Reason.

'Tis true, there are some things in the Gospel very sublime, such as Natural Reason cou'd never have discover'd, but now that they are Reveal'd, it finds no impossibility, no incongruity in them. For who can know the Divine Purpose, but those to whom GOD is pleas'd to declare it? Who can pry into the Divine Essence, or understand any more of it than GOD condescends to impart? Whatever He has reveal'd concerning Himself is true; if it be too high for us, it calls for our admiration, not our frivolous and presumptuous disputes. In a word, the Christian Institution has so little of worldly wisdom, human passions and contrivance in it; is in it self so Majestick, so Divine, so worthy of GOD, so admirably well fitted to lead us on to Perfection, by teaching and enabling us to despise and triumph over this World, and by preparing us for the Glories of the next, which is the great end of a Rational Nature, that every one who has either good-sense, or even a good-taste and relish of genuine pleasure, must needs be charm'd with its beauty; and be fully convinc'd that if GOD did at all design to give Mankind a perfect Institute, suitable to His own Glory, and His Creatures good, it must needs be such a Religion as this.

27. But tho' this is a very natural and easie proof of the Divine Authority of the Holy Scriptures, and such as every one to whom the Gospel is Preach'd may come at; yet is it far from being the only proof, much less that in which all other proofs determine. Were every one to believe, not *only our English Translation*, but even *the Original Copy* of Holy Scripture, no *otherwise*, than as they think *they see cause so to do*, being at liberty to reject as spurious, all that which does not sort with their *Conceits*, we shou'd have wise work! and most People wou'd have a wise Religion!

Letter concerning Church Communion. p. 26. A Pamphlet which does not deserve, but which may need, one's notice.

28. It is, according to some, *unworthy of GOD* to lay restraints upon the Creatures He has created, and not to allow them the full swing of all their Appetites. Others, how much soever they talk against Popery, have taken a fancy that St. Peter and St. Paul were very Jesuitical, when they commanded *Every Soul to be subject to the higher Powers, not only to the good and gentle, but even to the froward, to a Persecuting Nero*, who at that time Reign'd. For according to those Mens *conceits*, the Apostles meant no more, Than that Christians shou'd not attempt to throw off the Yoke, but when they had power to do it effectually. Some *deliberate so maturely*, and are so

Ibid p. 16. well instructed in *Immoral Practices*, that they call even *Non-resistance*, a *Traiterous Doctrine*, tho' it may be presum'd, that Governors wou'd be very glad to find all Traytors govern'd by this principle. There are twenty more *conceits*, as extraordinary as these, and perhaps there's scarce a Text in Scripture, which some body or other will not find occasion to object against; must we therefore suppose it is a corruption in the Original, or a mistake in the Translation, GOD forbid! for at this rate we shou'd have no Scripture at all, or any thing to trust to but our own wild Fancies.

29. Indeed shou'd ever so many People tell me that the Alcoran is a Divine Revelation, and bring what they call evidence, the very reading of it wou'd convince me that they are mistaken. But sensible prejudices are the main hindrances of our obedience to the Gospel, in Countries where it is profess'd, no wonder then that a Religion accommodated even to the lees and dregs of Sense, obtains among too many sensual Men. And perhaps one of the best rules whereby to judge of the truth of a Revelation, from the subject matter of it, may be this; Whatever Doctrine or Precept tends to the humbling of our proud Understandings, the subduing of our stubborn Wills, and the

the restraining of our exorbitant Affections, (tho' we may call these *Reason, Liberty*, and the *Rights of humane Nature*) does indeed proceed from GOD. Who as He *may* do this in His own Right, and by that Authority He has over us, so He kindly vouchsafes to do it for our advantage.

30. I find then that the Holy Scriptures have in themselves a divine Character, both in respect of the sublimity of the matter, and the majesty of the style, even without those allowances which certainly ought to be made for the Antiquity of the Books; the obsolete Customs and Manners of the Times in which they were compos'd; the difference of Idioms, and the infirmities of the Translators. For I question not but that if I cou'd read them in their Original, they wou'd appear even yet more Beautiful and Divine. Let me enquire then whether GOD has attested these Writings which are highly valuable in themselves, whoever was their Author, and which I can't but wish may be found to come from Him.

31. If it be said that I am already prepossess'd in their favour; be it so, mine is a prepossession that no reasonable Person needs be asham'd of, for Reason led me into it. But it must also be

granted, That if upon examination it does not appear that they have the Authority they claim, this prepossession will turn more to their disadvantage than it does now to their service. For tho' all Imposture is provoking, yet none is so odious, as that which wou'd pass upon us under the appearance of the greatest Piety and Simplicity.

32. What evidence therefore ought in reason to satisfy me? Shou'd I have stood by the Holy Pen-men when they wrote? I ought to consider that the Gospel was not publish'd only for me, but for all Christians in all succeeding Ages of the Church, and it is impossible that they shou'd all have this Proof. Do I desire to have a Miracle wrought in my presence for their confirmation? So may every other Person; and if Miracles were so frequent, we shou'd take no more notice of them, than of the ordinary course of Nature; which is indeed stupendious to all who consider it, only our being us'd to it, takes off our wonder. Wou'd I have an inward and irresistible impulse compelling me to believe? Where then were the reward and excellency of my Faith? Wou'd not GOD destroy His own work, and make me a necessary, instead of making me a free Agent? Besides, it is not decent, it does not become
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the Great GOD, nor can I in modesty expect that He shou'd do a particular act for me; I am not worth it. That I partake in His common Mercies is more than He owes me, but all the service I can ever pay, is due to him for this, and were too little to be paid, were it possible to render more. I ought therefore to be abundantly satisfy'd with such proof and evidence, as may extend to all Mankind. I wou'd not cavil or chicane with my Prince concerning the Bounties and Favours shewn me, much less will I have the greater insolence to do it with my GOD.

33. How do I know that the Emperor *Marcus Aurelius* wrote those Meditations that bear his Name, for such great Princes do not use to spend their time in Contemplation, nor do they commonly think so justly of the World and its apparent Grandeurs? How can I be sure that *Plato* and *Hierocles*, *Plutarch* and *Epicetus*, *Tully* and *Seneca*, were the real Authors of those Books that are ascrib'd to them, in which are many things that seem to be above a Heathens reach? What ground have I to believe that *Cæsar* wrote his Commentaries, and gives a true account of himself and his affairs? Or that other Histories are Authentick? But shou'd I set up to discredit and ridicule those

those Heathen Writers, does your Ladyship think that it wou'd pass with the World as an argument of my Wit and Reach, and that I was less credulous and more reasonable than my Neighbours? Shou'd I not rather be laugh'd at for my Folly and Self-conceit, and wou'd not the humour be despis'd as the whimsey of a *very Woman*, according to the civil phrase of some *very Men*, equally just and mannerly?

34. But I doubt I shou'd not come off so well as the being only laugh'd at, shou'd I aver that those Noble Peers who glory in the Antiquity of their Titles, have no sufficient proof whereby to make good their claim. Or that my rich Neighbour's Deeds and Evidences, are insufficient to convey his Estate to him and his Heirs, since no body knows but they may be Forgeries? But woe be to me, shou'd I dare to affirm, That *Magna Charta* is a Forgery; tho' there is a Learned Person who tells us, *That we have not one True Copy of it.* And yet, setting these hazards aside, if the humour of disbelieving takes me, what shou'd hinder but that I may doubt, or even positively deny, that there was ever such a Man as *William the Conqueror*, or those Successors of his, who granted the People their Rights and Privileges?

35. None

35. None of those Facts, Records, Evidences, or Books, are so well attested as the things that were done by *JESUS CHRIST* and His Disciples. They have not the concurrent testimony of so many Persons of all Nations, Ages, Ranks, Interests, Tempers, Enemies as well as Friends. Men of good Understandings, Sobriety, and Learning, as well as multitudes of all sorts and conditions, have not quitted all their expectations in this World, even Life it self, to bear witness to the Truth of those Facts, &c. as they have to confirm the Testimony of the Holy Scripture.

36. Nor cou'd it be a vain-glorious desire of leaving a Name behind them, that made Christ and His Apostles attest their Doctrine with their Blood. For there runs a native simplicity thro' their Writings, which proves them to be above such a design. They are as free in publishing the Poverty of their Master, and that shame and contempt He underwent, and even their own faults and infirmities, as they are in declaring what may recommend them, and yet there is nothing labour'd and artificial in what they say. The *Manner* of those Holy Books is such, as no humane Art can counterfeit: Whoever has a Taste, must needs distinguish them from all other

other Writings, and give them the preference.

37. It follows then, that if we mean to act like reasonable Creatures, since the Principles of Reason are general, we ought to be guided by them, not only in some particular cases, but in all. For if we will govern our selves by a certain Principle upon one occasion, and take no notice of it, nay, even act contrary to it in parallel cases, 'tis plain that we follow our Humours, or Passions, or Follies, but by no means our Reason. If therefore I discard the Holy Scriptures for want of proof, I must upon the same Principle, and for much stronger Reasons, disbelieve and reject every thing that has pass'd in the World before my time, or of which I have not been an eye or ear witness. How the wise Men may make a shift to govern themselves by such measures I know not; sure I am, that it is above the understanding and skill of any Woman, to live in the World and conduct her self by such rules.

38. But what evidence can one have that those Books were writ by the Men whose names they bear, and that these Men were really Commission'd by GOD to deliver them as His Word and Will? I must either have been an Eye and Ear-witness of what they said and did;

did; or else I must receive it upon sufficient Testimony. The first it's like might have pleas'd one better; but besides, that it is not possible that every Christian shou'd have that proof, as was already said, the latter is full as well, and throughout as Rational. And it is not to be doubted, but that those who will not be convinc'd by the one, wou'd never have been perswaded by the other. For the Pharisees confess'd that Christ did *many Miracles*, against the Truth of which they cou'd not object; at the same time that they agreed to *put Him to death*. They did not at all question that *JESUS* had rais'd *Lazarus* from the Grave; but this was so far from converting them to the Faith of Christ, that it only enrag'd their malice, so that *they consulted to put Lazarus to death also*, the better to stifle their own and the Peoples convictions. For it is plain that their Pride, and Vain-glory, their Covetousness, Malice, Envy, and the like Vices, were the true causes of their Unbelief; as they are still of Modern Infidelity, whatever pretences may be made for it.

39. A matter of Fact is so much the more confirm'd, by how many the more competent witnesses are brought to attest it. Hence it follows, that those who live in the last Ages of the World, will
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not have less, but more reason to believe the Gospel, than those who liv'd earlier. Nor were those things done in a corner; Christ came into the World in a Learned and Inquisitive Age; there was a whole Nation, and their Rulers more especially concern'd in point of Interest and Honour, to detect the Apostles if they were Impostures. And we find that they omitted nothing that either Bribery or Malice, Cunning or Power cou'd do to hinder the Preaching of the Gospel. So that we cannot with any tolerable pretence deny that there were such Men as the Apostles and Evangelists, who writ such Books, and attested them by the Miracles which are there Recorded. For Jews and Gentiles, the Polite as well as the Barbarous, the Learned and the Ignorant, the Great and the Little, multitudes of all Ranks have acknowledg'd it for above this 1600 Years.

40. And therefore since the matter of Fact, (*viz.*) That there were such Men, and that they writ such Books, and did those Miracles therein Recorded, for the confirmation of the Doctrine they taught, is better attested than any other Fact whatsoever; since the Holy Scriptures are in possession of the Title of the Word of GOD, have been receiv'd as such by different Nations, during a succession of
many

many Ages, and in spite of all opposition; since there is nothing in them but what is highly agreeable to the natural notions we have of GOD and of Religion, nothing contradictory to Reason, but such discoveries of truth as much improve it; since GOD himself has confirm'd this Revelation, both by the Prophecies that went before, by the Miracles that attended, and by the Agreement there is between the Doctrine it teaches, and a reasonable and uncorrupted Mind; since GOD cannot deceive us, nor give His Testimony to an Imposture, and yet upon the best use we can make of our understandings, we have no way to discover any Imposture in this Revelation, but must confess that it comes attended with all the marks and evidences of Truth; what can I plead for my self if I presume to reject or despise the Holy Scriptures?

41. But let it be suppos'd that the proof is not so clear and full as I have represented it, for we may allow our adversaries their most unreasonable demands, without any injury to our cause, whose triumph will only be so much the more glorious; yet I ought to be very clear and full in my proof, before I presume to charge the Holy Scriptures with Forgery: Because there is no manner of proportion

portion between the hazard of receiving, and the danger of rejecting them. For upon supposition, that they have no just pretence to Divine Authority, if I receive them as the Oracles of GOD, what do I lose by it? I am impos'd upon 'tis true, (and so we are all of us in twenty matters,) but not to my hurt. For tho' the Gospel were only a mere humane Invention, to live according to its Rules wou'd be the wisest course I cou'd take, for nothing cou'd be more for my present Interest, Safety, and Pleasure. If there be a Future State I am prepar'd for it; if there be none, I shall not be sensible of any loss. On the other side, if the Scripture is indeed the Word of GOD, and I disbelieve it, can I offer a greater affront to the Divine Majesty than by rejecting those Commands which He graciously allows me for my good? And since GOD is Essentially Holy and Just, how can I appear in His Presence having abus'd His Goodness? How can I endure His Displeasure! or to be in eternal opposition and enmity towards Him! Shall I run this risque because, forsooth, I wou'd not be thought credulous, I wou'd not be impos'd upon, I wou'd distinguish my self tho' it were by my Folly! I wou'd have my own Will, however unreasonable, and follow my own devices

devices, however ridiculous! Notwithstanding all disappointments I wou'd run giddily after Pleasure in those ways in which no body ever found it, certainly and without regret; and wou'd not follow the divine Directions, which are as full of Goodness as they are of Wisdom and Equity!

42. Supposing then that I cou'd not answer all that pert and pretending Men may object; will it follow that I must lessen my reverence for the Holy Scriptures? Not at all; any more than that I ought to forbear eating when I am hungry, because some Learned and Witty Man might harangue with much art and flourish that the Meat was poison'd, or fantastical, or that it was not agreeable to my present Constitution but wou'd certainly breed Diseases and Death; for much more I am sure might be urg'd on this Topick, than can be offer'd against the Holy Scriptures. But I shall not enter into a particular consideration of those objections, which wou'd carry me further than I design, and besides 'tis already done to very good purpose by better Pens. Indeed the common discourses are too trifling to deserve a serious answer, and one may in general observe, That they proceed either from Mens Vanity or their Vices; some take
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upon them to talk Irreligiously because they have the folly to think that it shews their Wit; others to countenance their Immoralities. And one may lay it down as a rule, That no Man attempts to speak disrespectfully of GOD, or of the Holy Scriptures, but he is at the bottom a vain and wicked Man: And whoever he be who endeavours to corrupt a Woman's Faith, he has a design to ruin her in this World as well as in the next. If she has too much Vertue to be assaulted directly, the way is to undermine her Religious Principles, these being the only firm foundation of real Honour and moral Honesty; nor can any Vertue stand firm against all attacks, but that which is founded upon a Christian Principle.

43. It appears then that the Holy Scriptures are our Rule of Faith and Manners, and for our better direction in both, we have no more to do but to study them. Whatever therefore I have to add must be drawn from this Fountain, and neither I, nor any Person whosoever, is to be credited any further in Religious Matters, than as what we say is agreeable to the Word of GOD.

44. I know it is very frequently, but very sillily said, who shall be judge of this agreement? One great Man says *this*, another *that*, and a third differs from them

them both, and a great many more from all these, and every one of the number has his followers. What then can a poor Woman do but follow that opinion which is most in Vogue? as if one was to tell Noses to find out Truth! Or else depend upon some one or more wise Men, whom chance, or her kind neighbour, or her circumstances of life have recommended to her; for sure she is to make as little use of her own judgment in choosing her Guide, as in following him! But as the diversity of Opinions in matters of Religion, is so far from being an Argument against Religion, that it strongly proves the great importance of that which all the World so warmly contends about; so whatever helps Error may stand in need of, the Truth laid down in Holy Scripture shines by its own light, and may be attain'd by every reasonable, honest, and unprejudic'd enquirer, whose Vices and worldly Interests have not darkned his Mind, and warpt his Understanding.

45. Perhaps I may be thought singular in what I am about to say, but I think I have reason to warrant me, and till I am convinc'd of the contrary, since it is a Truth of great importance, I shall not scruple to declare it, without regarding the singularity. I therefore beg leave

to say, That most of, if not all, the Follies and Vices that Women are subject to, (for I meddle not with the Men) are owing to our paying too great a deference to other Peoples judgments, and too little to our own, in suffering others to judge for us, when GOD has not only allow'd, but requir'd us to judge for our selves.

46. How those who have *made themselves* our Governors, may like our withdrawing from their yoke I know not; but I am certain that this principle of judging for our selves in all cases wherein GOD has left us this liberty, will introduce no disorder into the World, or disobedience to our *Lawful* Governors. Rather, it will teach us to be as tractable and submissive to Just Authority, as we are careful to judge rightly for our selves, in such matters wherein GOD has not appointed any to judge for us. The insinuations of those who have no right to be our Directors, but who have only usurp'd an empire over our Understandings, being one of the principal causes of our disobedience to Lawful Authority. Both by their rendring us disaffected to our proper Governors, as is their usual practice, that so they themselves may intirely command us: And also because sooner or later we shall be convinc'd
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of the dishonour and damage of being any ones Property, and thence grow suspicious of, and uneasy at the just Commands of those who have a right to prescribe in some cases.

47. What is it that chains us down to the slavery of all the silly Customs of the Age, to the waste of our Time, the expence of our Fortunes, nay even to the depraving of our very Reason, but because we must do as others do, and are afraid of the singularity of being Wiser and Better than our Neighbours? So that we force our selves to practice those Follies, which whilst we practise we condemn! What is it that engages Women in Crimes contrary to their Reason, and their very natural Temper, but the being over-perswaded and over-rul'd by those to whose conduct they commit themselves? And how do they excuse these Crimes, but by alledging the examples and opinions of other People?

48. I do not deny that singularity in trifles and indifferent things is a Folly and a Vice; but to be singularly wise and good in the midst of a crooked and perverse Generation, and in spite of all the persecutions we suffer for being so, is the most exalted pitch of heroick Vertue. And is very well consistent both with the care that Christians are oblig'd

to take, that they *do nothing but what is of good Report*, that they *avoid the very appearance of Evil*, and give no just offence either to the Strong or to the Weak, to the Charitable or to the Censorious: And also with that obedience and submission that is due to Lawful Authority.

49. But how much soever I am, and I am as much as any one can be, against Private Doctors and Directors, who are often but corrupt and muddy streams which withdraw us from that *Well of Life* that is freely offer'd to all who will apply themselves to it; False Lights who lead us into By-paths, and turn our Eyes from that *Sun of Righteousness*, which *enlightens every one* who Humbly and Reverently looks up to Him; and am of opinion that Guides, tho' when prudently chosen they may be of excellent use to Men, can never unless upon an extraordinary occasion, and under great caution, be proper for Women because of Scandal; yet none can pay a greater deference to the Church Universal, or to that Particular National Church, by whose charity thro' the Blessing of GOD, I am a Member of the Catholick or Universal Church, the Body of Christ. Who has been pleas'd to constitute a Church, and has ordain'd an Order of Men to admit into this Society and to shut out of it, to govern and direct, and to minister to
all

all its wants, as it is a Spiritual Community; as the Scripture teaches us, and as is also evident from the reason of things. For there must of necessity be an Establish'd Government, where there is a form'd Society; nor can it be imagin'd that the GOD of Order, the Wisdom of the Father, by whose commission Temporal Governments are settled for the good of Mankind, shou'd leave His Church, whom He so dearly loves, in Anarchy and Confusion, and not constitute divers *Orders in it, for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the Body in Love.* And therefore let the Men that execute this Office be what they may, the Order and the Authority is GOD's, and as such I reverence it, considering Him who *sent them.*

50. So that if thro' the sublimity of the Subject, my ignorance of the Sacred Languages, of Ecclesiastical History, and the ancient Usage of the Church, any point in controversy be too difficult for me, and that after all my diligence I can't clear up the matter with evidence and certainty, but that all I can attain to is probabilities on both sides: If it is a matter in which a final decision is not necessary, I will suspend my judgment in hopes of further information; but if there is a necessity to determine, I will

with all humility submit to GOD's Authority in his Church. Not to the Man whom I may fancy or choose, for this were to follow my own way and not GOD's; but to him or them who shall have Lawful Authority over me. For tho' they shou'd happen to lead me into error, yet in this case they, and not I, must answer for it; as for me, I am safer in my Obedience, than I cou'd have been even with Truth in a disorderly way. I will consult the Bishop of the Diocess in which I live, if it be a matter of great concern; but upon less occasions, the Parish Priest, to whom he has committed the Cure of Souls. For it is not because a Man talks finely in a Pulpit, or has an agreeable way in Private Conversation, that I depend on him; or because I think he is a Man of Learning; or which is better, of Good Sense; or which is best of all, of great Integrity of Mind, and of an holy and unblemish'd Conversation; but in pure Obedience to GOD, who has commanded me to *Obeey them who have the Rule over me*, and who *watch*, or at least ought to watch, *for my Soul*: And in this way because it is His own, I may humbly, yet confidently expect His Blessing.

51. As for Church Communion, I can't say it is impossible for a *Man* or *Woman* to be good Christians, tho' they *do*
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*not join themselves in Publick Communion with any Church, because 'tis possible that this may not be in their power. But if we receive the Scripture, 'tis certainly necessary for me, and for every Christian Man and Woman, who live in Christendom, to joyn our selves Publickly to some one or other Church Communion of Christians. And if the Establish'd National Church where we reside, enjoins no terms of Communion evidently Sinful, it is our duty to joyn our selves to her. She may require it, for she has an authority over us, Christ having delegated His own power to the Governors of His Church. So that he who refuseth to hear the Church, does hereby renounce Christianity, and becomes a Heathen Man and a Publican, as our Lord tells us, *Matth. 18. 17.* To talk of being Members of the Universal Church, and yet not live in Communion with some Particular Church when this is in our power; is much the same as to value our selves on being Freemen at large, free of some place or other, but we know not where, for no Corporation will own us, or allow us its privileges.*

52. And therefore, tho' *no Man or number of Men, have a right to impose on my Belief, yet the Church has a right to my Obedience in every thing that is not Sinful; and that for this plain reason,*
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Because the Holy Scripture commands me to live in Union and Communion with her? What else can be the meaning of those many Texts which enjoyn us; *not to forsake the Assembling of our selves together, as the manner of some is; But to glorifie GOD with one Mind and with one Mouth?* Why are we so pathetically exhorted to *be of one accord, of one Mind, to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace; to mark those who cause Divisions, and to avoid them?* Why does our Lord pray that *we may all be one, and that we may be made perfect in one, that the World may know that GOD has sent Him?* Which design of our Lord is pursued by His Apostles, when they enjoyn us to *walk by the same rule, to mind the same things, in the unity of Faith;* and that because we are *but one Body in Christ, and every one Members one of another.* Division therefore, and separating our selves from the Christian Community upon any account but absolute necessity, is destructive to the Body; as on the contrary, Order, Decency, Unity, and Church Communion, tend to the *perfecting of the Saints, to the edifying of the Body of Christ.* Christians being under solemn obligations, as they are Christians, and as they hope for any benefit by this Profession and Divine Institution, to be *one* in their inward Affections

Affections and outward Worship, so far as it is Naturally and Morally possible, and so far as lawfully and innocently they can.

53. Now I think my self in Catholick Communion with the Church of GOD, if I live in *constant Communion* with the Bishop in whose Diocese I reside. The Scripture having told us, That the Holy Ghost has made the Bishops *Overseers of the Flock*, to feed the Church of GOD; and it being their business to maintain Communion with all their Fellow-Governors, that so the Universal Church may be united under Christ the Head. And as it would not avail me to be call'd by the name of Christ, or even to have been one of His immediate Followers, and to have done Miracles by His Power, if I did not obey His Commands: So this of Church Communion being one of them, and very pressingly enjoyn'd, I can by no means pretend obedience to Christ, if I despise or neglect it. Acts 20.
28.

54. Supposing then that I had been an *African*, and converted by the Christian Slaves who were lately in Captivity upon the Coasts of Barbary. 'Tis confess'd that upon the redemption of these Captives, I cou'd not have had Communion with Christians in Religious Offices; and yet that I might have enjoy'd Spiritual Communion with Christ the Head of the Church,

Church, and so with the whole Body. The Mercies of GOD not permitting Him to punish any of His Creatures, for the breach of any Law which it is not in their power to keep. But if I had preferr'd Heaven to Earth, I must have been desirous to quit all my Temporal advantages in my Native Country upon the first opportunity, rather than not place my self where I might receive the advantages of a Christian Society. For if I had only consulted my New Testament, left with me by some good Captive for my instruction and comfort, and had been unacquainted with any *Commentator thereon*, and ignorant of the Lives of Modern Christians, I must needs have concluded, that to quit all for Christ's sake, for the *one thing necessary*, and to think my self a very great gainer if *by losing the World* I cou'd procure any advantage to *my Soul*, is a Fundamental Christian Doctrine.

55. What's to be done then? I Transport my self into *Spain* or *Italy*, there I meet with numbers of Christians, and as they tell me the Catholick Church under the government of Christ's Vicar. An Office that I do not find in any part of my New Testament, nor do many of the doctrines they wou'd oblige me to receive, appear in the Sacred Pages, but quite

quite the contrary; surely then say I, if these are Christians, they are mightily degenerated from their first Institution. I'll enquire further, and so I take a Journey to *Geneva* and *Amsterdam*, where I do not find such a superstructure of hay and stubble, as I was scandaliz'd at in the other Churches. But endeavouring to inform my self more perfectly in the Christian Religion, and examining further into the reasons of our receiving the Holy Scriptures as the Word of GOD, which is the very foundation of my Faith, as Faith is of my Christianity; I find upon strict enquiry, That the same Catholick Tradition whereby the Holy Scriptures are convey'd to us, and prov'd to be what they pretend, does likewise deliver to us another Form of Government than that which is establish'd in the Churches among whom I inhabit.

56. And further, consulting my New Testament, I find that *no Man can lawfully Preach unless he be sent*; sent, according to Divine institution and designation as *Aaron was*; and that GOD hath instituted divers Orders in His Church, giving to them different Offices and Powers. Thus *Philip* one of the Seven ordain'd by the Apostles to a particular Ministration, *Acts 6.* and who is call'd an Evangelist, Preach'd the Gospel to the *Samaritans*,

2 Tim. 1.
6.
2 Tim. 2.
2.
Titus 1.

ritans, but his Authority did not extend to the *laying on of Hands*, whether this signifies what we now call Confirmation, or the Ordaining of Ministers for that Church, or both, as is most likely; and therefore St. *Peter* and St. *John* were sent to perfect what *Philip* had so well begun. In like manner, St. *Paul* in his Epistles to *Timothy* and *Titus*, having asserted his own Commission and Authority, directs them how to behave themselves in the Government of the Church of GOD, how to use that power they had received from the Apostle, and how to convey it to others. So that tho' I will not blame any Church for the want of this Apostolic Government, not knowing what difficulties they labour under; yet if there be a Christian Church, at once free from the Corruptions of *Rome*, and the Imperfections of *Geneva*, I shall most gladly joyn my self to her Communion.

57. Now I am told of a Renowned Church, to which all the Reformed Churches give the Right hand of Fellowship, thither then, I direct my course. And when I come to *England*, what find I there? different ways of Worship, which I was not so much scandaliz'd at whilst I remain'd at *Amsterdam*, because of the different Nations that inhabit there. But
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different ways of Worship and seperate Congregations among Natives, because of some external Modes not held unlawful, and tho' all profess the same Doctrine, must needs be matter of offence to an honest *African*. The Doctrine of the Establish'd National Church I find to be exactly agreeable to my Testament; and her Government and Publick Worship most conformable thereto, and to what I have learned of Antiquity; and the whole is more orderly and edifying, than any I have hitherto met with; here then I fix, and I think it worth my while, whatever the Journey or Examination may have cost me. I lament indeed to see the Lives of too many of her Members, so little conformable to the Doctrine she teaches them. But our Saviour has prevented my being scandaliz'd at this, by comparing the Kingdom of Heaven, that is the Church of GOD, to a Field in which are Tares as well as good Corn, and to a Net, wherein are bad as well good Fishes. Thus might I have become a Member of a particular National Church, and of the Episcopal Church in this Kingdom, even without the good fortune of being born in *England*; and thus I shou'd have done if I had had a due concern for my Salvation.

58. As for *controversies in Divinity*, tho' I will not *condemn* a Man as an *Heretick* without examining his Opinions, yet I hope I may establish my *own* Faith, without taking the trouble to read or hear all that Talkative Men may have said about the matter. And as to the mysteries of the Christian Religion, if I did not find them in my Bible, I shou'd never seek them elsewhere. Nor do I wonder that there are mysteries in it; I shou'd wonder greatly if there were none.

59. For what is a Scripture Mystery? What but a sublime Truth concerning the Nature of GOD or His manner of Acting, which we cou'd never have discover'd by mere human Reason; and which, tho' it shou'd happen to be above our weak Understandings, so that we can't fully comprehend and account for it, is not therefore the less true, or less intelligible in it self, or less distinct and manifest to a higher Understanding and superiour Reason. For as *my* Reason is not the standard of Truth and Knowledge, and I shou'd be very ridiculous and presuming did I pretend that a proposition was false and absurd, for no better reason than because I did not comprehend it: So neither is the most exalted Human Understanding, no nor the highest order of created Intelligencies, the standard

dard of Truth and Reason. For it is the Prerogative of Infinite Wisdom, the Supream or Divine Reason, and of this only, to be the measure of Truth.

60. But the Christian Religion is very far from being *Dark* and *affectedly Myste-rious*; its Revelations are as clear and as plain as the sublimity of the matter will admit. No body will call the Mathe-maticks an obscure and mysterious Science, and yet it proposes Theorems which will appear as Abstruse and Mysterious as any Doctrine in the Gospel, to those who know nothing of that Science, nay even to such as have some smattering in it. Theorems that will pass for direct Nonsense and Impossibilities to an un-skilful Person, who yet it's like may have confidence enough in his good understanding to pass his verdict on them; and which even a modest and ingenious Person may look upon as strange and incom-prehensible. For wou'd not your Ladyship think I banter'd you, shou'd I affirm, That there are certain Lines which tho' they infinitely approach, yet will never meet? and that there are finite and determinate Spaces equal to infinite? and yet that there are such Lines and such Spaces, may be demonstrated.

61. I shou'd have felt the weakness of human Nature, and its inability to live

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according to right Reason, and to arrive at that perfection it incessantly desires, tho' I had never seen the Scriptures: But I shou'd not have known that *Adam's Sin* was the cause of this, and that since I spring from him, he cou'd derive no other than his own deprav'd and degenerate Nature to me. My deviations from right Reason, or the Sins that I am conscious of, and that regret, fear, and disorder of Mind which naturally and necessarily attends them, wou'd have rais'd in me passionate desires of Pardon and Reconciliation with my Maker: But I cou'd not have told on what terms He wou'd vouchsafe to be Reconcil'd, if He had not been pleased to declare them. For that GOD wou'd send His Son, at what time, and in what matter, to Reconcile the World unto Himself, was what no Created Understanding cou'd ever have attain'd the knowledge of, unless GOD had thought fit to Reveal it. We have a natural and general Perception of GOD, but our particular notions and further knowledge of the Divine Nature, is wholly owing to Revelation. And therefore I dare not be so audacious as to question the Truth of any thing Revealed by Him, or to object against any sort of Worship or Obedience which He requires, or to receive so much and

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no more of it, than suits with my Fancy, or what I call my Reason. On the contrary, having once sufficient proofs of the Truth of the Revelation, I have no more to do but to receive the Divine Pleasure, and to submit to the *whole Will of God*, with the utmost humility and prostration of Soul.

62. Again, tho' I do not understand the Philosophy of the Union between the Divine and Human Nature; (neither do I comprehend the Vital Union between my Soul and Body, nor how and in what manner they are joyn'd, tho' I am sure that so it is,) yet since the Scripture very frequently calls JESUS of *Nazareth* the Son of GOD, and also the Son of Man, I must believe that these two distinct Natures do in Him make One Person; and that that Holy Child who was born of the Virgin *Mary*, is *GOD with us*. That the Father is GOD, the Son is GOD, and the Holy Ghost is GOD, is plain from Scripture, the Name of GOD being ascribed to each of these Divine Three, in such a manner as it is never imparted to any Creature. Now we know that there can be no inequality in the Divine Nature; as the Scripture says nothing of a *Made GOD*, so right Reason explodes it; and to pay Divine Worship to any but

GOD is gross Idolatry. And therefore since we are taught in Scripture that GOD is One, and are also taught to worship Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and since we are even Baptized in their Name; the Divine Three are but One GOD, whose Nature we must Adore, but can never fully comprehend. Nor can any similitudes drawn from natural things, of which there are several, help us to a proper and worthy Idea of the Divine Nature, tho' they may give us a faint resemblance of it. *G O D is Great, and we know Him not, we cannot find Him out, with Him is Terrible Majesty, we shou'd therefore fear Him, He respecteth not any that are wise of Heart.*

Job 36. 26.
Eccl 37. 22,
Eccl.

63. Who among us will pretend to a complete and perfect knowledge of the Mystery of GOD's Love to Mankind? Is there not a length and breadth, a height and depth in it, which we can't fathom? As indeed there must be in every thing that GOD does, much more in what He is, for *who can search out the Almighty to Perfection?* But I hope no Man will say that GOD's Love to us is less true, or less evident, because it is so Mysterious? Were it not a wise inference shou'd I conclude that there is no GOD, or that it is not necessary for me to *concern* my self about Him, because I can

can never hope to comprehend Him? Is it not much more reasonable to affirm, That that Being which I can fully understand is not GOD, because the very Nature of GOD speaks Him Incomprehensible? I wonder therefore why Wise Men give themselves so much trouble in solving Difficulties, and explaining Articles and the like; for in my mind such sublime Truths cannot be more intelligibly, more rationally, more consistently and clearly exprest to an honest, unprejudic'd and attentive Mind, than the Catholick Doctrines are deliver'd in Holy Scripture, and as the Church has sum'd them up in her Creeds.

64. As for those *nice Speculations or profound Mysteries which have no direct tendency to improve our Morals*, they may very well be past by. But all Mysteries are not nice and needless Speculations, for the Scripture teaches us a *Mystery of Faith*; *a Mystery of Godliness*; *a Mystery of GOD*, and of the Father, and of Christ. And as Christianity has its Mysteries, so have these Mysteries a direct and great influence upon Christian Morals. For instance; What can give us so great a detestation of Sin, and so effectually deliver us from the power of it, as the Mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of GOD? When we learn that GOD cou'd not, or

Ladies
Religion,
P. 9.

1 Tim 3.
9. 16.
Col. 2. 2.

wou'd not, (which is one and the same when we speak of GOD, who always does what most becomes Him; and can, that is, will do nothing but what is Best, and therefore wou'd not) pardon Sin, without such a Propitiatory Sacrifice, such a full Satisfaction to His Justice, as the Passion and Death of His only and well-beloved Son! Did we always keep a lively sense of this in our Minds, we might Sin if we cou'd; it wou'd be morally impossible, I mean, for any the greatest Temptation to prevail upon us.

65. Indeed I have always observ'd, That those Men who talk the most against Mysteries, are of all others the most mysterious and unintelligible. Give me leave to ask you, Madam, if you have not a clearer notion of GOD and His Goodness from those words of Scripture, which inform us, That in *Him we Live, and Move, and have our Being*, than from that *most lively manner*, as the *Ladies Religion* tells us, in which the *Divine Nature is set forth by Pythagoras*? Shou'd I say to your Ladiship, That *Deity is the Vital Spirit of the Universe; that GOD is the Temperament of all Ages, the Principle of all things Individual, &c.* I'm afraid you wou'd think it Jargon; and tell me I wou'd never have made use of such expressions, if I had not affected to be *Dark*
and

and *Mysterious*. I was indeed almost afraid that our Divine had forsaken his *easy and familiar way of Instruction*, and was return'd to his old *By-paths of obscure and unintelligible Doctrines*, which can have no effect upon us besides unprofitable amusements, when I read his 60, 61, and 64 pages. But then I began to consider, that in this Learned Age of ours, it is to be suppos'd that Ladies understand not only *Latin and Greek*, but even *Hebrew and Persian Criticisms*!

66. In a word, tho' the *Philosophy* of the Mysteries of the Christian Religion is above our reach, yet the *Truth* of them is plainly laid down in Holy Scripture. And I intirely agree with our Divine, that the Christian Institution which was design'd for all sorts of Men, the Poor in particular, who don't use to be the most Learned, is *easily Intelligible*. His brevity it's like, wou'd not allow him to give instances, and therefore I shall offer one in each of his four General Heads.

First then, matters of *Fact* are plainly related. Thus it is very plain from the whole Tenor of the Gospel, That the Believing that JESUS was the Messiah, the giving Credit to the Miracles He did, and the profession He made of Himself, and upon this ground giving up themselves

Reason. of
Christi-
anity, 2.
Edit. p.
26. &c.

* See *ibid.*
p. 25, &c.
49, 50, 96.
† *Ibid.* p.
33.

See John
10, 30,
&c.

Lev. 24.

Reason. of
Christi-
anity, p.
152.

to His Conduct, and to the Rule of Life propos'd by that GOD into whose Name they were Baptized, was that which made Men Christians. It is also as plain, that it was the Faith of the Jewish * Church that the Messiah was the Son of GOD; that He † *was to be without Sin*, which GOD only is; according to what our Saviour said to the Young Man, *Why callest thou me Good? dost thou believe me to be GOD the Messiah? For there is none Good but one, that is GOD.* Nor can any thing be plainer than that JESUS took upon Him to be GOD equal with the Father, when He said to the Jews, *I and my Father are one*; that the Common People as well as other Jews understood Him so; and that He did not go about to remove this opinion, but confirm'd them in it. And it is also plain, that in the opinion of the Jews, and indeed of all Mankind, whoever takes upon him to be GOD, and is not GOD, is a Blasphemer. And we may observe, That the Jews upon this occasion, are ready to execute the punishment the Law inflicted for Blasphemy. So that any one who had made an *attentive and unbiassed search*, might have found another Law besides that against False Prophets, Deut. 18. 20. whereby our Saviour's making himself the Son of GOD deserv'd death,

death, in the opinion of the unbelieving *Jews*.

Secondly, All Laws must be plain because they are Directions. And Laws which are difficult and dubious to be understood are Snares and Traps. Therefore when JESUS commanded His Disciples to Teach all Nations, Baptizing them in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, making this the very Form of admission into His Religion, it's plain that He neither makes, nor supposes any difference in the Nature of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, but places them in an Equality, which had certainly been a Snare and a Trap, and apt to lead Men into Idolatry, had there been any essential difference in the Nature of the Divine Three; and had Men been obliged to believe that pretended deep speculation of an inferior, a created, or made God, that unintelligible Mystery, set on foot by profound Men.

Thirdly, 'Tis necessary that moral motives shou'd be very Intelligible. Therefore when St. Paul goes to convince the Philippians, that they ought to be Humble, because of that wonderful Example of Humility set them by JESUS CHRIST, he tells them plainly, That Christ who was in

Matth. 28.

19.

Phil. 2. 5,

Ec.

Reason. of
Christian.
p. 36, 55.

in the *Form of GOD*, and *Equal with GOD*, did not disdain to *Humble Himself*, and to be *made in the likeness of Man*. Now this had been nothing extraordinary, and consequently no motive, it had been only an *abstruse and mysterious* Jargon, had JESUS been *only a mere Man*, how extraordinary soever.

Acts 10.
28.

Fourthly, Mystical and unintelligible Exhortations are ridiculous; so that when St. Paul exhorted the Bishops of Asia to *feed the Church of GOD which He has purchased with His own Blood*; he must mean that the Church of GOD was Purchas'd or Redeem'd by Blood, and that this Blood was the Blood of GOD; or else 'tis plain that the Apostle speaks in an unknown Tongue, uses an *obscure and unintelligible* Language, and means nothing.

Matth. 26.
28.
Acts 2. 38.
Rom. 3.
24, 25.

67. And because the Holy Scriptures do frequently tell us of *Remission of Sin*, and that this Remission and Redemption is purchas'd for us by the *Blood of Christ*, which is a *Propitiation* for all them who with hearty Repentance and true Faith turn unto Him; I dare not say that our Saviour's *only design* was to *save us from the prevailing power of Sin*, and those miseries it wou'd involve us in; if by this power

Ladies
Rel. p. 4.

er

er no more be meant than what we usually call the dominion of Sin. Christ indeed came to save us from our Sins in all senses; to save us from the Guilt of Sin, from which we cou'd never have deliver'd our selves, the most perfect Mortal being liable to this guilt, since *there is not a Man upon Earth that doth good and Sinneth not.*

68. And as the *Expiatory Sacrifices* practis'd by the *Heathens* throughout the World, shew'd it to be the common sense of Mankind, that *without shedding of Blood there is no Remission.* So GOD Himself express'd His approbation of this natural Notion, by rectifying the abuses crept into it, and giving several Laws to the *Jewish Church* concerning Expiations. But then as the Apostle argues, since *it is not possible that the blood of Bulls and Goats shou'd take away Sin*, these must be typical of some thing else that cou'd; even of the *Precious Blood of Christ*, as of *a Lamb without Blemish, and without Spot.* Who offer'd *one Sacrifice for Sins*, and by *that one offering, hath perfected for ever them that are Sanctified*; hath purged our Sins, and given us *Redemption thro' His Blood.* And being thus purified from the Guilt and Stain; we are then, and not otherwise, capable of making use of GOD's Grace to save us from the *power and dominion,*

Reason. of Christian.
p. 267.

Heb. 9.
22.

Heb. 10.

4.

1 Pet. 1.

19.

Heb. 10.

10, 12, 14.

Heb. 1. 3.

Col. 1. 14.

nion, and consequently from the evil effects of Sin. For all being Sinners and Transgressors of the Law, and so unjust; are all liable to Condemnation, unless they believe in the Messiah, who by His own Blood hath obtain'd eternal Redemption for us, putting away Sin by the Sacrifice of Himself. And as the Messiah was once offer'd to bear the Sins of many, so unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without Sin unto Salvation. Which with many other Discourses, some of them in the Gospel and Acts, as well as in the Epistles, not only sounds something like, but plainly declares Christ's purchasing Life for us by His Death; laying down His Life for another, and restoring Life to Mankind.

69. Let it then be allow'd that we are not to learn the Fundamental Articles of Faith in the Epistles; yet those to whom we make this concession cannot deny, That the Epistles are the best Expositions of those Fundamental Articles taught in the Gospel. For when Men thro' ignorance or ill-design, had put a false gloss on the Christian Doctrines, the Apostles took care to resolve doubts, reform mistakes, and explain fundamentals, for the expounding, clearing and confirming the Christian Doctrine, and with regard to the state and exigencies of those times. Upon the same Occasion arose the Creeds of the Catholick Church, who did

Reason. of
Christian.
p. 245.

Heb. 9.
32.
See the
whole
Chapter.
V. 26, 28.

Vindic. of
the Reas.
p. 5, 6.

Reason. of
Christian.
p. 295.
298, &c.

p. 298.
p. 299.
p. 300.

did not *enlarge* her Articles by adding to *Vindic.* them, but only explain them; whence *P. 17, 18.* the *Spirit* of a certain Author's *Creed-making* took its rise, let him declare. For as for the *Christian Religion*, upon the most *attentive* and *unbias'd search*, I find it convey'd to us in the following manner.

70. The Messiah, the Wisdom of the Father, did by His own and His Disciples Preaching, instruct Mankind in a Religion which the truly *Wise* and *Learned* may be satisfy'd with, as well as the *Labouring* and *Illiterate Man* may comprehend. He taught Men to worship the One True GOD, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, by whom the World was made, and who in the fulness of time spake to us by the SON, GOD *manifest in the Flesh*, who was Conceived and Born without Sin, that He might be Crucified, Dead, and Buried, for the Remission of our Sins, and who Rose again and Ascended into Heaven, in earnest of our Resurrection, and to obtain for us Eternal Life, *thro' sanctification of the Spirit* whom He sent to guide His Church into all Truth, and belief of the Gospel. These were the plain and simple Truths that were every where Preach'd and Believ'd by all who were admitted into the Communion of Saints;
as

Reas. of
Christian.
304.

p. 302.

as is evident to any one who reads the *Gospels* and the *Acts* with singleness of Heart, nor needs there a pompous enumeration of Texts to prove it. The *several Texts* of Scripture may be put and made to *consist together* in this sense, very easily and naturally, and without any force, by him who uses *fair endeavours*, who comes with a docility and disposition prepar'd to embrace and assent to all Truths coming from G O D, with submission of Mind. Nor can he who brings such a disposition of Mind be ignorant of them, so far as one can conclude from the reason of things, and without seeing deeply into the Heart, the Heart of Man which is unsearchable by human Eyes.

Rom. 1.
21, 22.

71. But when the Enemy of Souls, according to our Lord's Prediction, began to sow his Tares by the hands of Men, who because when they knew G O D they glorified Him not as G O D, neither were thankful, but being vain in their imaginations, and professing themselves to be Wise, above what is written, became Fools; When some began to corrupt the Christian Doctrine by either openly maintaining, or covertly insinuating, That the Object of the Christian Worship, was no more than an extraordinary Man, or a Made God at best; that he was a Quality, or Mode, or Manifestation, and not

a Subsistence, or in the plainest language, not a Real Being: It was then absolutely necessary for the Church to explain her Fundamental Articles, according to the *Form of Sound Words*, which she had heard of Christ and His Apostles, and in opposition to those *False Teachers who privily brought in damnable Heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them; and who by good words and fair speeches, deceiv'd the Hearts of the Simple.* 2. Tim. 1. 13. 2 Pet. 2. 1.

72. Indeed the most dangerous sort of Seducers are those who with *cunning craftiness lie in wait to deceive*, Men who do not speak out, and declare in words at length, what they too plainly insinuate, for then one cou'd know what to say to them. But by mixing Truth with Error, and delivering their Propositions in such doubtful expressions, as are true in one sense, tho' false in another, they secure themselves a retreat in the *sincerity* of their *thoughts*, and their *single denial*, if you press them with that sense they do not care to own; for who can pretend to know other Mens Thoughts and Reasons, better than they themselves? How far this agrees with that ingenuity and sincerity that always accompanies Truth, I leave the World to judge.

73. But

73. But tho' our Saviour thought fit to decline declaring Himself to be the Messiah in exprefs words, and that for very good reasons, according to the account of a late Author, (*viz.*) To avoid all occasions of Sedition, or the least *
Reason of Christian. *suspicion* of it; that He might *not* * *die*
see p. 137, *as a Criminal and a Traytor*, or do *any*
147, &c. *thing that might be offensive, or give the least*
** p. 134.* *umbrage to the Roman Government*: Yet
*p. * 154.* we find His Apostles declar'd the Truth with *boldness*, being neither asham'd nor afraid to own it without reserve. Thus St. Paul assures his *Asian Converts*, That he *had kept back nothing that was profitable unto them, and had not shun'd to declare all the Counsel of GOD.* Tho' a Prisoner at the Bar, he *urg'd such points to Felix*, as made him Tremble, *perswading him to be a Christian*, not by concealing, but by inculcating such Truths, as he was most averse to. And whether or no we are to *blame the Prudence of some Men*, such as the Missionaries in *China*, who *mention no more of Christianity than will give them access to those Men they wou'd prevail upon*, I am not now to examine. But, as appears to me, the *Reasonableness of Christianity* does not consist in avoiding such *Arguments as Men object against*, but in these two great Truths, (*viz.*) 1. That there is not any thing so Reasonable as
to

Acts 20.
20, 27.

Act. 24.
24, &c.

Vindic.
p. 7.

to believe all that GOD has Reveal'd, and to practise all that he has commanded. 2. That GOD has given such proofs and evidences as are sufficient to satisfy any Reasonable Person, That the Christian Religion is a Divine Revelation.

74. The business then is to enquire, What those *Propositions* are which are required to be actually believ'd to make us *Christians*. Ibid p. 16. And I shall not scruple to say with a certain Author, That the believing JESUS of Nazareth to be the Messiah, was the only Gospel Article of Faith, Preach'd by Christ and His Apostles, upon their assent to which Men were receiv'd into the Christian Church: Provided, that this be understood, not as Excluding, but as it Includes, all those Propositions or Articles of Faith that are summ'd up in what is commonly call'd the Apostles Creed; and that it does include them will appear presently. Reason. of Christian. p. 26. 278 p. 194, 195. and through out.

75. In the mean while, and in order to it, give me leave to observe, That this same Author of the Reasonableness of Christianity as deliver'd in the Scriptures, very wisely informs us, That to find out the true Meaning, and Mind of a Writer, we must look into the drift of the Discourse, consider the Occasion of Writing, the Argument in hand, and what is principally aimed at. Now setting aside Conjectures, and prying into Folks Hearts, F our

- our Author tells us, That *Justification is the subject of his Treatise*. And addressing himself to the *makers of Systems* for the
- Dissenting Congregations and to their Followers*, he says that his design is to teach them a *plain intelligible Religion*, that they may not be deceiv'd by mistaking the *Doctrine of Faith, Grace, Free Grace, &c.* nor scruple to call *Obedience a condition of the New Covenant*. To this purpose he largely shews the true meaning of Faith, that it does not exclude Works, nor will be sufficient without them, and that the Belief of the Messiah, and what necessarily follows from this Belief, a *strict and holy Life* according to the Rules of *Christian Morality*, whether it be call'd an *Historical Faith*, or by whatever other name, is indeed that Faith *our Saviour and His Apostles Preach'd, and declar'd to be a Justifying and Saving Faith*. The *Priestcraft* therefore which he exposes, is theirs who make it *their business* to get all the *Custom*, and not to teach Men *Vertue*, and who *distinguish Religion from, and prefer it to Vertue*, making it dangerous *Heresie and Prophaneness* to think the contrary. All the address he uses being design'd to convince the Dissenters if possible, how unreasonable it is to *divide Communion and separate upon Points* which tho' they reckon of so great weight, so material, so fundamental in Religion,

Religion, yet are either so abstruse or so unnecessary, that even *some of their Teachers* whom *he talk'd with*, confess themselves not to understand the difference in debate. *

76. But had our Author's *Argument* been concerning the Holy Trinity, the Divinity or Satisfaction of Christ, we shou'd have found how he wou'd have taken the *Socinians* to task upon this occasion! For he repeats it again, That there is *Vindic. p. 13.* not a word of *Socinianism* in his Book. Tho' I do not remember where he had said it before, unless where he makes this quaint Answer to his Adversaries charge upon the score of his Omissions: But what (says *Ibid. p. 4.* he) if I shou'd say I set down as much as my *Argument* requir'd, and yet am no *Socinian*? Readers we know are charitable, or at least ought to be so; and it agrees better with some Men's *Logick* and *Grammer* to ask themselves the question, what if I shou'd say I am no *Socinian*? than to say in plain terms, that they are not *Socinians*.

* It is also worth observation, That as if by the Spirit of Prophecy, our Author lays down a Principle to determine the great Controversy about Occasional Conformity, at this time so warmly manag'd among us. (p. 306) For justifying GOD's conduct towards Adam, in return to the common Objection, "How doth it consist with the Justice and Goodness of GOD that the Posterity of Adam shou'd suffer for his Sin? He answers, Very well, if keeping one from what he has no right to be call'd a punishment. Immortality was not due to Adam, &c. p. 7. It appears then by the Arguing of this great master of Reason and Friend to Moderation, that keeping Men from what they have no right to, can't be called a punishment, how much less a Persecution?

Reason.

p. 267.

Vindic. p.

17, 18, 32.

p. 35.

Reason.

p. 202,

203, 204.

John I. 14.

p. 207.

H. b. 2.

10, 11.

p. 203.

p. 207.

Colos. 2. 9.

p. 35, 36.

77. For as for a Man's speaking slightly of *Expiatory Sacrifices*, and having a fling at *the Priest's good Pennyworths*, at *Orthodoxy*, *Creed-making*, and *Articles* not yet understood: Tho' he expresses himself in the very same terms when he speaks of *Adam's* being *the Son of GOD*, and of *the Likeness and Image* he had of his *Father*, as he does when he speaks of *that SON of GOD*, whom the Scripture calls *the only begotten of the Father*, making no manner of distinction in their *Son-ship*; nor between Him *for whom* are all things, and *by whom* are all things, and those whom out of infinite condescension *He is not ashamed* to call His *Brethren*, any further than that these are by *Adoption*, and Christ is by *Birth* the *Son of GOD*; by *Birth* meaning no more, so far as he lets us into his meaning, than that He had *no other Father*, which was *Adam's* Privilege as well as Christ's: Tho' he tells us *the great evidence*, that *JESUS* was the *Son of GOD* was his *Resurrection*, intimating at least, and so far as great Letters will go, that our *Resurrection* will be the like evidence of our *Son-ship*: Tho' when he speaks of that Divine Person, *in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead Bodily*, he calls Him no more than an *extraordinary Man*, an *extraordinary Person*, making these two expressions, and *Messiah*,

siab, and Son of GOD, to be all of them
 Synonymous; ascribing to Christ only an
unparallel'd Wisdom, not an Infinite; altho' p. 66.
 the Scripture tells us, That in Him *are hid*
all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge; Col. 2. 3.
 and also that He has *wash'd us from our Sins* Rev. 1. 5.
in His own Blood, whereas our Author says 1 John 1.
 no more than that *the Messiah was to suffer* 7.
Death for the Testimony of the Truth; and p. 61.
 from certain passages in his Treatise col-
 lects what *methinks sounds some thing like Vindic. p.*
Christ's purchasing Life for us by His Death: 5.
 Tho' he insists so largely on the Belief and
 Worship of one GOD, without any the p. 261,
 least mention of the Adorable Persons in Ec.
 the Godhead; and tho' he tells us *we must* p. 264.
ascribe the Mahometans owning and pro-
fessing of one GOD to that Light the Messiah
brought into the World; whereby we are
 left to believe if we please, That there
 is no difference between the Christian
 and Mahometan Belief of that Funda-
 mental Article: Yet this notwithstand-
 ing, who can see into *his Heart*? Who *Vindic.*
 can *charge him with Socinianism*, or say there p. 14.
 is any thing in his *Book against the Religion* p. 12.
contain'd in the Gospel? since he flatly de- p. 10.
 nies it, and that *surmises may be over-* p. 4.
turn'd by a single denial?

78. I shall not put him to the expence
 of one, having no design to Accuse him,
 his Meaning and Motives be to himself:

Nor shall I accept his *Challenge* p. 195. Not out of fear of his strength, since that Uncreated and Incarnate Truth whom I Adore, and upon whose assistance only I depend, *is strong and will prevail*, and has *chosen the foolish things of the World to confound the wise, and the weak and despis'd to confound the mighty, that no Flesh shou'd glory in His Presence*; But because I love to be a Peace-maker, and had rather reconcile our Author to himself. For supposing one might *cull out* of his Discourse any *Aphorisms* contrary to the Christian Faith, I will not however, say p. 295. he has *mistaken or slander'd Christianity*, Vind. p. 10. which he says he *hop'd to serve*. Since he tells us he knows the *sincerity of his Thoughts*, and is *satisfy'd with this assurance*, *That if there is any thing in his Book against what any one calls Religion, it is not against the Religion contain'd in the Gospel*; and for this he *appeals to all Mankind*.

79. Come we then to the merits of the cause, and *in the Spirit of the Gospel, which is that of Charity, and in the words of Sobriety endeavour to shew*, 1. That the bare belief that *JESUS was the promis'd Messiah*, was not the only Article of Faith Preach'd by Christ and His Apostles to those who acknowledg'd the One True GOD. And, 2. What are those other Articles,

Articles, *an explicit Belief of which, is absolutely requir'd of all those to whom the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST is Preach'd, and Salvation through His Name propos'd.* Reason. of Christian. p. 301.

80. The First Proposition might be prov'd by several Arguments, I shall only insist on one, which being full and to the point, is as good as twenty. Our Author tells us, That *the coming of the Messiah, the Kingdom of Heaven, and the Kingdom of GOD are the same, and was what John the Baptist Preach'd: And that this same Doctrine and nothing else was Preach'd by the Apostles afterwards.* The former part of this Assertion we shall allow him, the latter is the point in question. If then it can be prov'd, That either Christ or any of His Apostles (for there was Uniformity in the Church of GOD at that time, whatever may have been since) did not think the Belief of that Article into which John Baptiz'd sufficient for a Christian Believer, or all that was absolutely necessary to be Believ'd, it undeniably follows, That the Belief that *JESUS is the Messiah*, exclusive of all other Articles, is not the *one great Point or Gospel-Article of Faith* requisite to make one a Christian Believer. p. 52, 53. p. 186. p. 195.

80. Now that St. Paul Preach'd some other *Articles of Faith*, is evident from

See Acts
19.

p. 198.

p. 53.

p. 42.

p. 239.

Matth. 28.
19.

what we read of the Twelve Disciples he found at *Ephesus*. They Believ'd the *Messiah*, for they had been Baptiz'd into John's *Baptism*, which was that Men shou'd Repent and Believe the glad Tidings of the *Messiah*, as St. Paul acknowledges. But yet the Apostle did not think *this same Doctrine* and nothing else sufficient, *this was not the sum and substance of the Gospel which he Preach'd*, nor all that he knew necessary to *Salvation*, tho' our Author affirms it was. He therefore Baptizes them *in the Name of the Lord JESUS*, that is in the Name of the *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, which was the Faith into which our Saviour commanded His Apostles to *Evangelize all Nations*. For St. Paul did not Baptize in his own Name, nor by any form of his own Invention. Now unless the Apostle had Intructed them in the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, they wou'd have continued to say to him, *We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost*, into whose Name you Baptize us. And by this whole Narration it appears, that the Doctrine concerning this Divine Person was so plainly a part of the Christian Faith, that the Apostle cou'd not suppose any *Disciple* or *Believer* was ignorant of it. So that in St. Paul's Judgment, who understood the *Christian Religion* as well at least as our Author, to be Baptized

tized in the Name of JESUS CHRIST, p. 200.
 was indeed *that solemn visible Act whereby*
Mankind were admitted as Subjects into His
Kingdom, but it signify'd somewhat more
than the bare Believing Him to be the
Messiah, the receiving Him as their King,
and professing Obedience to Him. This was
 not sufficient to make Men Members of *p. 300.*
His Church, without an explicit Belief of
other Articles; and what they are comes
now to be consider'd.

82. Our Author allows that the Be- *p. 43.*
lief of one Eternal and Invisible GOD, the p. 25.
maker of Heaven and Earth, is a Funda-
mental Article. And tho' at the same
 time he contends, *That Salvation or Per-*
dition depends upon Believing or Rejecting
this one Proposition, this single Truth, that *Also p. 47.*
JESUS is the Messiah; yet he is more
 condescending towards the end of his
 Book. For *p. 294,* he takes in *those con-*
comitant Articles of Christ's Resurrection,
Rule, and Coming again to Judge the World,
 making them to be *all the Faith requir'd.*
 In *p. 203,* he founds our Saviours Son-
 ship, upon his being *Conceiv'd of a Virgin*
by the Immediate Power of GOD; and one
 can't believe that JESUS is the Messiah
 without believing Him to be the Son of
 GOD, for these our Author makes to be
 terms convertible. He is so kind *p. 185,*
 as to reckon these particulars, (*viz.*)
 That

p. 31. The
Resurrecti-
on of
Christ is
made a
necessary
Article.
See also p.
40, 41.

p. 47.

p. 16. 20.
p. 10.

That the Messiah *had a Kingdom, that He shou'd be put to Death, and Rise again, and Ascend into Heaven to His Father, and come again in Glory to Judge the World,* among the things *necessary to be believ'd,* and what Christ acquainted His Apostles with, as the *main design of the Gospel.* And when our Author tells us as he does, p. 290. That a *perfect complete Life of an Eternal duration, was no where made an Article of Faith,* till JESUS CHRIST came, he wou'd have us understand that then it was. For sure he does not mean to omit a Principle that *gives the advantage to Piety over all that cou'd tempt or deter Men from it?* We have therefore in a manner all the Articles of the Christian Faith, except those of the Holy Trinity, the Catholick Church, and Communion of Saints; for he makes Faith in the Messiah to carry with it *Remission of Sins;* and the benefit of the New Covenant to consist in *Remission or Abatement,* and in *that Life which JESUS CHRIST restores to all Men at the Resurrection:* So that we have these Articles exprest almost in the very words of the Creed.

83. I am perfectly ignorant of our Author's Heart, and pretend not to any knowledge of his Thoughts and Reasons, and therefore I will not presume to surmise why he makes no mention of the
Doctrine

Doctrines of the Trinity, since his profess'd design is to speak of *those Truths*, *Vind. p.* and of those *only which are absolutely re-* *30.* *quir'd to be believ'd to make any one a Christian;* And he Challenges the World to *Reason. of* *show that there was any other Doctrine than Christian.* what he mentions, *upon their assent to* *p. 195.* *which, or disbelief of it, Men were pronounc'd Believers or Unbelievers.* It is to be presum'd indeed, that Christians can't be ignorant or forgetful of the Name into which they were Baptiz'd, especially since they either have, or ought to have *ratify'd and confirm'd the same openly* *See the* *before the Church, at which time they are* *Order of* *Bless'd, by the Successors of our Lord,* *Confirmation.* *tion.* *in the same Name.*

84. But whatever Men may say or do, this is certain, That by the very form of admission into His Church, the Messiah has shut out all those who do not either by themselves or by their Sureties, *actually assent to the Faith and Worship of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.* This is a *Fundamental which it is not e-* *p. 302.* *nough not to disbelieve, for since the Faith* *(it shou'd* *GOD will accept and account for Righteous-* *be 303.)* *ness, depends wholly on His good Pleasure;* *p. 301,* *since it is of Grace and not of Right that this Faith is accepted, therefore He alone can set the measure, and what He has so appointed and declar'd is necessary. Nor cou'd any*
Propo-

p. 263.

Proposition have been declar'd necessary, more plainly and universally, than by commanding all Men who list themselves in His Service and expect the benefit thereof, to make a solemn profession of their Belief in Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to whose Worship and Service they entirely devote themselves. This being the Worship of *the one Invisible True GOD, made known to the World* by the Messiah. And by this time I hope our Author will think fit either to withdraw his *Appeal*, or else to acknowledge that we have done him no injury by understanding his Assertion, *That the Belief of the Messiah is the only Gospel Article*, not as *exclusive* of all others, but as *including* those already mention'd. To which let me now add, The Belief of the *Holy Catholick Church*, and the *Communion of Saints*, since we must necessarily Believe that there is such a Community, when we come to enter our selves into it. And it is also suppos'd, that we believe there are advantages to be receiv'd in this Communion, otherwise we shou'd not desire a Fellowship in it.

85. It is then evident, that the Belief that JESUS of *Nazareth* is the Messiah, and the Belief of all the other Articles of the Creed, *have so natural a connexion one with*

*with the other, that they may be, and often are, put for one another. For he who Believes in the Messiah, must Believe Him to be sent into the World to be our Lord, by G O D the Father Almighty, the Maker of Heaven and Earth, whose Only Son He is. That SON, as St. Peter calls Him by way of Emphasis, when in the name of all the rest of the Apostles he confess'd Him to be the Messiah; That Son, (tho' our Author only reads the Son, p. 102.) in a peculiar manner different from all other Sons, of the Living GOD, whether * * Adam or any of his * * See p. 202. &c. Posterity, or those Sons of G O D that Job 38. 4, shouted for Joy, when this SON of GOD, 7. by whom All things were made (as we John 1. 3. have it in the Gospel as well as in the Epistles) laid the Foundations of the Earth. For to which of those other Sons did GOD at any time say, Thou art my SON, Heb. 1. 5. this day have I Begotten Thee: And I will John 1. 14. be to him a Father, a Father before Adam, & 3. 16. or any thing else was Created, before He had laid the Foundation of the Earth, or the Heavens which are the work of His hands? That SON, who is call'd the Only Begotten of the Father, the Brightness of His Glory, and the express Image of His Person, G O D's Image in respect of His Power as well as of His Immortality, and that in a manner inconsistent with the Nature*

Discourse
concerning
the Love
of GOD,
p. 114.

Isai. 42. 8.

Heb. 1. 8,
13.

† Reas. of
Christian.
p. 205,
206.

Phil. 2. 6,
7.

Nature of a Creature, for He *upholdeth all things by the Word of His Power*; they depend upon Him, and as a certain Author says very well, GOD cannot make a Being independent on Himself; so that this Divine Person on whom all things depend, must necessarily be GOD. That SON, whom the One Supreme Invisible GOD, who is so Jealous of His Glory as to declare He will not give it to another, has yet commanded not only all Men, but even all Angels to Worship. And hath Himself said to this SON, *Thy Throne O GOD is for ever and ever, — Sit on my Right-hand, untill I make Thine enemies Thy foot-stool.* That SON, who in a most Excellent, Peculiar, and Ineffable manner, such as Creatures cannot apprehend or properly express, is the Only SON of the FATHER. The SON, not † by Birth as some love to speak, for Reasons to themselves best known, but by Nature. For that this is the meaning of *being in the Form of GOD*, is evident from a parallel expression in the next Verse, where His appearing in the Nature of Man, is expressed by His *taking upon Him the Form of a Servant.* To which He condescended when He was pleas'd to be Born of the Virgin Mary, after a Supernatural manner, as all who Believe in the Messiah must confess. As also, That this

this Divine Person, who as we have seen is GOD and Man; (GOD of the Substance of His Father, begotten before the Worlds, and Man of the Substance of His Mother, born in the World, as the Creed very aptly expresses it) Liv'd such a Life, and Died such a Death, as is Recorded in the Gospels, and was Preach'd throughout the World by His Apostles. That is in short, *He suffer'd under Pontius Pilate, was Crucified Dead and Buried, Descended into Hell, the third day He Rose again from the Dead, He Ascended into Heaven and sitteth on the Right-hand of GOD:* All which are the Evidences of His being the Messiah, so that the Proof of it was not full and clear without the knowledge of them. And if I may give my conjecture, this was the reason why our Lord tells His Disciples, That it was expedient for Him to go away and to send the Comforter or *Paraclete*, who was not to come till Christ was departed. As much as to say, That they cou'd not be complete Christians till they had a full and perfect Faith in the Messiah, which they cou'd not have but by those Evidences upon which such a Faith was founded, and this cou'd not be till all that was foretold of the Messiah was accomplish'd, and that in particular which was the last Act of His Mission,

Mission, the consummation of this great Work, His pouring out His Spirit upon them, who shou'd work in their Hearts a complete Faith in Him, fully convincing the World of the Truth of His Mission, and rendring all those inexcusable who rejected it. The sending of the *Holy Ghost* therefore was as necessary to be believ'd as the coming of the Messiah, as has been already shewn from St. *Paul's* Authority, and as appears from the very Plan of the Christian Religion. What was it that perswaded Mankind to receive the Doctrine of the Messiah, but the great advantages they expected by it? such as *the Remission of Sins, the Communion of Saints, the Resurrection of the Body, and the Life Everlasting?* And what cou'd engage them to Obey as well as to Believe, Obedience being as requisite as Faith? What but the Belief that the Son of Man wou'd come in the Glory of the Father, *to Judge both the Quick and the Dead?* At whose coming all Men shall rise again with their Bodies, and shall give an account of their own Works. And whoever Believ'd this Faith, and Hop'd for these advantages, was requir'd by the Author of them to initiate himself into the Christian Community, or the *Holy Catholick Church*.

p. 200.

86. So that to sum up all in a word, whoever believ'd that *JESUS was the Messiah*, and profess'd themselves *Subjects of the Messiah's Kingdom*, did hereby engage to Worship GOD after that manner which was enjoyn'd by the Messiah. Into whose Religion they cou'd not be *Initiated* but by acknowledging Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the Object of the Christian Worship, whose Service they engag'd in, and into whose *Kingdom they en-* p 199.
ter'd themselves by that Solemn and Divine Rite. And thus did *our Saviour make the one* p. 263.
Invisible True GOD, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, *known to the World*, and by this *clear Revelation dispell the Darkness* in which he *found the World*. Hence is this Proposition, That *JESUS is the Messiah* so often put for the Whole of the Christian Faith, and Faith for the Whole of the Christian Duty. That Faith is put for the Whole of Religion is plain from that Text our Author takes notice of p. 95. (*viz.*) Rom. 10. 8, 9. as well as from other passages of Holy Scripture: *Tho'* p. 93.
obeying the Law of the Messiah our King, be no less requir'd, than our believing that *JESUS is the Messiah*. And now I leave it to your Ladiship, and to all who will give themselves the trouble to read these Papers, to determine upon a fair and unprejudic'd examination, whether or

Preface.

no I have made good what I undertook to prove Paragraph the 79th? And whether I have hit the meaning of the Author of the *Reasonableness of Christianity*: or which of us *has mistaken the Sense and Tenor of the Gospel?*

p. 285.

87. I do not accuse that Author of any *tang of Prepossession or Phansy*; any *foot-steps of Pride or Vanity*; any *touch of Ostentation or Ambition*, any *thing tending to his own bye-interest*, or *that of a Party*; as if these had *tempted him to mix any conceits* with the Christian Religion, or to give any wrong turn to the Faith of the Gospel. And I hope I have not treated him otherwise than becomes a Christian, whose Charity is the substance of what Good-breeding is only the shadow and counterfeit. Whether he be the same Person who writ *A Discourse concerning the Love of GOD*, or who is the Author, it is not my business to enquire, since he has not thought fit to discover himself. Nor am I about to *complain* or make *reprizals*, whatever occasion might be given by that *Discourse*. I found nothing in it to make me change my judgment about the point in question, as will appear presently. The Argument I knew was in better hands than mine, and I cou'd not think it proper (after some Peoples fashion) to trouble the World with *Answers*

swers and *Replies* fill'd with little but *Personal Reflections*, such as shew rather the flip of the Manager than the weakness of the Cause. The justifying one's own opinions, merely as they are one's own, being in my mind a very poor employment, and which I shall leave to those who like it. But having now an opportunity to clear up some important Truths, which is all I am concern'd for, I thought it not amiss to bestow a few Pages on this Author, and hope what has been said will not appear Impertinent nor Foreign to my Subject. Especially since the *Ladies Religion* seems to be little else but an Abstract of the *Reasonableness of Christianity*, with all those disadvantages that usually attend Abridgments.

88. I will not *Conjecture* what makes some People so warm against the Hypothesis of *seeing all things in G O D*, nor why after so much discourse about Ideas, they are so hard to be reconcil'd to an Ideal World. But this I may say with due submission to better Judgments, that that Hypothesis and what is built upon it, gives a better answer than any Hypothesis I have met with to the trifling and unreasonable Objections, for so I will presume to call them, tho they are the strongest that can be made by the

Ladies
Religion,
p. 5.

Esay. 40.
17.

Colof. 1.
16, &c.

greatest pretenders to Reason, against the Divinity of the Son of GOD. Some have told us that *the chiefest good of Man is the best Design of G O D*; I cannot answer for the Thoughts they seem to have of G O D and of themselves: But this I know, That those who are conversant in that Hypothesis, have too awful a sense of the Divine Majesty to endure so presumptuous a Supposition. They know that G O D is His own Design and End, and that there is no other Worthy of Him. For since there neither is nor can be, any comparison between the Creator and His Creatures, far be it from us to think so unworthily of G O D, and so arrogantly of our selves, as to suppose that *His Wisdom contriv'd all things for our Use, or supports them for our satisfaction, who are before Him as nothing, who are counted to Him as less than nothing and vanity, who are not worthy of His notice but in and thro' His Son our Lord, by whom, and for whom, were all things Created, and by whom all things consist.* The Relation we bear to the Wisdom of the Father, the Son of His Love, gives us indeed a dignity which otherwise we have no pretence to. It makes us *something, something considerable even in G O D's Eyes.* And in this respect and upon this account, the Creation and chiefest Good of

of Man is a design worthy of GOD, I know not how we shall be able to prove it so upon any other.

89. We have already seen that there is a GOD; consequently we who are His Creatures and who depend upon Him entirely, owe Him the utmost Duty and Service. It has also been prov'd, That GOD, has Reveal'd His Will to us, hence it follows, that it is our Duty and Wisdom to pay the most exact Obedience to His Reveal'd Will, even tho' there were no Sanctions annex to it. But since it is plain from Scripture, that there are such great and dreadful ones as become the Divine Majesty, it is our highest Interest to be Obedient, and we can't transgress without the greatest Folly and Madness, as well as the most notorious Injustice, Ingratitude, and Wickedness.

90. Eternal Misery being the Penalty annex in the Gospel to wilful Disobedience and Impenitency, is for this reason highly equitable, since every thing that GOD does is Holy, Just, and Good. But we need not rest in this general account; GOD's *ways are equal*, they will bear the Test of the severest Reason, to which with amazing condescension He sometimes appeals. And tho' He is Absolute Sovereign of all Things, so that

none may say unto Him, what doest Thou? yet He not only allows but requires us to judge of the Reasonableness and Equity of His Proceedings.

91. Tell me then, O ye Potsberds of the Earth, who take upon you to contend with your Maker! why GOD who is the Fountain of Being and Perfection, may not communicate these in what manner, and by what measures, is most agreeable to His own Infinite Wisdom? We know that the excellency of a work appears by that variety of Beauties that are in it: What makes the Universe so Beautiful but its innumerable varieties? and you who are such lovers of Variety can have nothing to say against it. Was it then unfit for GOD to adorn His Creation with all imaginable Ranks and Degrees of Being, consequently with Free Agents which is a very noble Order?

92. Now the difference between a Free and a Necessary Agent consists in this, That the Actions of the former, or more properly the Motions of his Mind, are in his own power. He has Ability, as every one of us is sensible, to determine them this way or that, according to his own pleasure, and as he is affected by the suppos'd agreeableness of the objects he pursues. Which power or faculty is what we call Liberty, which distinguishes

guishes a Free from a Necessary Agent, for this last does not determine it self, has no command over its own motions, but is absolutely govern'd by a foreign cause. But in whatever Degree of Being a Creature is plac'd, whether it be a Free or a Necessary Agent, there must be a certain measure of Perfection belonging to its Rank, which it cannot attain but by some certain and stated Progressions or Methods, suitable to the Nature that GOD has given it, and in the same manner as a Seed becomes a Plant, or a Plant a Tree. Some actions therefore do naturally and necessarily tend to the Perfection of Mankind, and others as naturally and necessarily drag us down into Misery.

93. If then you will allow that GOD may create Free Agents, and where I pray is the Injustice of it? since it can't be suppos'd that He lays irresistible restraints upon them, or gives them irresistible impulses, which were to destroy the Nature He has made, and to contradict Himself, consequently all that can be done for them, even by Infinite Power and Goodness, conducted by Infinite Wisdom, is to allure them to good by the vastness of the Pleasure propos'd, and to deter them from Evil by the dread of the Pain that is threatned. GOD

can neither be hurt by our Wickedness, nor benefited by our Obedience, His Promises and Threatnings therefore are purely for our Advantage. And since we find in Fact that the severest Threatning, even Inconceivable and Eternal Misery, does not deter Mankind from Sinning, from doing that which naturally and necessarily tends to their own hurt, it is not to be imagin'd that lower motives wou'd have any effect upon them. So that GOD has appointed a Hell for the Wicked in mere Goodness to Mankind, since this or nothing will work upon the most disingenuous Tempers, and stir them up to qualify themselves for that Heaven which He is desirous to bestow on them.

94. This Argument sure may weigh with us because it is drawn from our own Interest, tho' we have the insolence to over-look another not less reasonable in it self. We take no notice how indecent and every way unfit it is, that the Divine Authority shou'd be violated, as it will certainly be, unless GOD's Laws are asserted by a Sanction some-way suitable to the Dignity of the Legislator. But tho' our great Pretenders to Wit and Reason are often guilty of the grossest Follies and Absurdities, yet they ought to know that the
Wiseſt

Wiseſt and the Beſt of Beings can never contradict Himſelf. He will for certain do what is fit, tho' thro' our own ill management it may happen to be to our infinite damage. For the Eſſential Rectitude of His Nature, does as much oblige Him to puniſh the Wicked, as to reward the Obedient.

95. Atheiſm is not Tenable, the ſhrewdeſt Wits among our Libertines, who are moſt deſirous to throw off the Fear of GOD and of a *Future Life*, that they may indulge themſelves as they pleaſe in *this*, are not able to maintain it. Much leſs can the little Fry defend it with their noiſe and confidence, which can't ſilence the convictions of their own Minds, tho' the violence of their Appetites may over-rule them. They are therefore forc'd to confeſs a GOD to ſolve the appearances of Nature, and to avoid a World of abſurdities ariſing from their *Epicurean* Systems, and they find that a Future State is a neceſſary conſequence of the former Truth, and therefore can't abſolutely be deny'd.

96. But then leaſt they ſhou'd be diſturb'd in their Vices, the Purity of the Chriſtian Moral being the true objection againſt the Truth of the Revelation, they take up with certain looſe notions, not leſs extravagant and abſurd than
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down-right Atheism; but which they force themselves to be content with, since they can have no better. There is a GOD they say, but if you put them to explain their notion of Him, you'll find them so intent upon His Self-sufficiency and Mercy, as to forget all His other Attributes. So that the God of this sort of People, is not that Great and All-perfect Being, who is the Creator and Lord of all things, but an Idol of their own invention. They do Him no hurt they cry, therefore His Goodness won't permit Him to hurt them. And whilst they pretend to think very greatly of the Divine Nature, they describe His Mercy and Goodness not like the Attributes of a GOD, a Being Infinite in all Perfections and consequently essentially Just and Holy, but like that foolish pity and softness which we usually despise in those we call easie and good-natur'd People.

97. But does not our natural notion of GOD, that which mere Reason will help us to, if we don't neglect to use it, convince us, That GOD is Absolute Lord and Sovereign of all His Creatures; That He has more right in us than we have in our selves, since we subsist only by His Power, depending upon Him for every moment of our Being? Therefore
all

all the Homage we can possibly pay Him is indispensably due; Justice and Order which are essential to the Divine Nature require it, so that it must necessarily, and according to the Reason of things, either be paid in Kind or by an Equivalent.

98. The same natural Notions do also assure us, That the Essential Rectitude of the Divine Nature, will not permit Him to use His Power and Lawful Authority otherwise than is just and fit, so that when of His free Bounty He gave us Being, He did not intend to make us Miserable but Happy. But then if we confess that GOD is infinitely Wise, we must needs allow Him to know wherein our Happiness consists, and to be best able to prescribe us the proper methods of attaining it. His very Goodness will determine Him to give us Rules, and our own Interest as well as Duty will incline us to observe them.

99. So then Happiness is to be obtain'd not by following our own Will but by observing His. For sure we don't pretend to Treat with GOD, and to tell Him we will have none of His Happiness, none of that which is suitable to the Nature He has given us: But a Happiness after our own wild Fancies, tho' it be contrary to all the rules of order
and

and right Reason; so that GOD cannot gratify us in our Folly but by denying Himself, that is, by acting contrary to the essential Perfections of His own Nature?

100. If GOD had not given us sufficient Light to discern between the Evil and the Good, nor Motives strong enough to incline us to pursue the one and to avoid the other; if He had not put Happiness in our own choice, but had inevitable determin'd us to Destruction, this indeed had been a want of Mercy and Goodness, if not a want of Justice towards His Creatures. But none of all this is our case, to be sure we who live in a Christian, in a Reform'd Country, can't with any face complain of it. Shall we pretend Ignorance? we who pride our selves so much upon the refinements of our Wit, and the improvements of our Knowledge? Or are we only ignorant of the noblest and most important Truths, tho' they are daily read in our Churches? and tho' many of them may be discover'd only by retiring into our selves, and humbly and attentively consulting the Eternal Reason of things? Nor can we pretend to want motives, for what can be greater than Eternal Happiness and Eternal Misery? The last it seems is too big for us, and there-

therefore we object against it, pretending it is not to be reconcil'd to the Goodness of GOD, according to the usual absurdity of People of Libertine inclinations. For were not the reasonings of such, as corrupt and vicious as their practices, and both of them all over Folly and Inconsistency, they might easily discern that the Divine Excellencies will not suffer it to be less. For even the very Goodness and Mercy as well as the Wisdom of GOD require Him, if He is pleas'd to propose *any* Motive, to propose *such* an one as is most like to be effectual.

101. Where GOD has given but little Light, no doubt He makes great allowances; this we may be sure of, that He is no hard Master, nor requires an increase beyond the Talents He has given us. But tho' the Light shine ever so bright about us, we can have no Vision unless we open our Eyes. Tho' the motives are ever so strong and powerful yet they are *but* motives; they are most proper to persuade, but they neither can nor ought to compel.

102. O but say some, why shou'd GOD thrust me into Being whether I wou'd or no, imposing such Conditions on me, that had it been left to my choice, I wou'd have refus'd Being rather than
have

have consented to them? Such stuff do Men utter when they forsake Reason to follow their vain Imaginations! 'Tis a wonder they do not quarrel with their Fathers for making them Heirs to great Estates: For why may not one conclude that these noble Spirits if it had been put to their choice, wou'd have thought it better to have had no claim to their Fathers Estates and Titles, than to have been the Offspring of such Misers and Blockheads, as these elevated *Genii* may, it's like, suppose them!

103. And were it not that such mighty Wits as these are much beyond the reach of my poor Understanding, I wou'd humbly beg leave to ask them, whether any imaginable restraint or difficulty how great soever, that is to continue but for a certain time, and much more if it can't exceed a Hundred Years, and very probably will be over in half that time, bears any manner of proportion to Eternal Happiness? Certainly their Nature and mine are of a very different make, if they don't find an incessant desire after Happiness, even endless Happiness. And our Understandings are as opposite, and so I can't argue with them, if they will not allow that we are very graciously dealt with, by being admitted to receive endless Happiness upon *any*,
even

even the hardest conditions. Nor can any conditions be call'd hard, that are to take place no longer than this very short Life of ours.

104. But if the *Beasts of the People*, 'tis a Scripture Phrase and a very apposite one, will be so sottish as to part with a glorious Reversion, an everlasting Felicity for a Mess of Pottage, there's no more to be said, they must have their wise choice! And since this and all the consequences of it is their *Choice*, let them not for shame say they are hardly dealt with. For in a word, all the pretences that are made for Infidelity and Immorality, resolve into love of the *present* Pleasure whatever it be. We *will not* use our Reason to compare what we get with what we lose, but are hurried on by a *present* brutal Appetite, tho' to the loss of Pleasures unspeakable and Eternal.

105. This is then the sum of the matter; GOD who is Infinite in all Perfections, in Justice and Holiness, as well as in Goodness and Mercy, always does what is best and most becoming His Perfections, and cannot act but according to the Essential Nature and Reason of things; nor is it possible that our Wishes or Actions shou'd make any alteration in the immutable Rectitude of His

His Conduct. He has made us Free Agents, which is an inestimable Benefit unless we wilfully abuse it. There can't be a more outrageous violation of the Sacred Law of Order, than disobedience to the Sovereign Lord of all things; our Great and Liberal Benefactor, our Creator and the best Being; to Him who wou'd have All Men to be Sav'd; who has design'd us an Endless Felicity, which nothing but our own Wilful Obstinacy can deprive us of. Hence it follows, That since GOD has made us Immortal, and it does not become Him to annihilate His own Work, the Eternal Misery of an Obstinate Sinner, is necessary and unavoidable. Such a Wilful perseverance in Sin, notwithstanding all the convictions of Reason, and all that GOD has done to call him to Repentance, resolving finally into a contempt and hatred of GOD. A Temper so utterly incapable of Happiness, that (as must be acknowledg'd by the greatest Libertine) unless GOD shou'd give him a new Nature, he cannot *possibly* be Happy. And sure Men have not confidence to expect this from the Divine Goodness, how easie and soft soever they may fancy it, after so ill a use of GOD's former Favours! Neither wou'd a new Act of Grace be of any advantage to them, unless

less GOD shou'd deprive them of Liberty and make them Necessary Agents, that is, make them other Creatures and not Men. Otherwise he who is at present unaffected with the Infinite Goodness and Long-suffering of GOD, which ought to lead him to Repentance, wou'd continue his Impenitency; *he who is Unjust, wou'd be Unjust still; and he who is Filthy, wou'd be Filthy still.* Leaving these Men therefore in their own Mire, and to be corrected by their own Folly, let us consider the Practical Duties of Christianity, that we may Practise as well as Believe, all that is requir'd of us in order to our Salvation.

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S E C T.

S E C T. II.

106. **W**HOEVER considers Religion as he ought, will find that it is not an Arbitrary thing, much less an Invention of Men, or as some think fit to call it, Priest-craft; but that it has it's foundation in Nature, being deriv'd from the two principal powers of the Mind, the Understanding and Will. For I hope it has been already shewn, that Reason brings us to the Knowledge of GOD and to a Belief of all His Revelations; and I shall now add, That our desire of Happiness exacts from us a strict Conformity to His Will. So that it wou'd be no ill definition of Mankind to term them, *A Race of Religious Creatures inhabiting this Earth, whose Nature leads them to Adore GOD, and to desire incessantly to Enjoy Him*: Those of our Race who do not come within this definition, being Monsters rather than Men.

107. That we always thirst after Happiness needs no proof; and I shou'd think it needs as little, that He who gave us Being, neither wants Power nor Goodness to give us Well-being, without which the other wou'd be no Favour, and that He

He is best able to shew us the way to Happiness. Consequently the Christian Religion which comes from GOD, as has been already prov'd, must be the *certain*, and at present, at least to those to whom it is Preach'd, the *only* way to Felicity. However I shall take it for granted here, hoping by GOD's Assistance to make it out more fully in another place; and shall lay it down for a Maxim, That the Law of GOD is not only most Just and Fit, and most Excellent in it self, but even most desirable to us; as every one who makes a due use of His Reason, will be forc'd to confess.

108. For what is it that GOD requires of us? no very hard task one wou'd think, for it is only a sincere and constant endeavour after our own Perfection. GOD has made us Rational and Free Agents, capable of paying a reasonable and voluntary Homage to His Majesty, and of enjoying the happy Effects of it. He has set before us Good and Evil, Life and Death, and conjures us by all the Duty we owe to Him, by all the Gratitude we ought to pay for the most stupendious instance of His Love in our Redemption, and by all the kindness we have for our selves, to do what becomes us, and to avoid the necessary and intolerable Effects of

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dege-

degenerating from the dignity of our Nature. Since therefore we desire our own Happiness, and GOD desires it also, and has done so much, even beyond our Modest hopes, in order to it, what can hinder it? What, but that we our selves do not know the way to Happiness, and yet are so sottish that we will not follow GOD's directions. *This is the Will of GOD, even your Sanctification*, says the Apostle, there being no way to be Happy but by being Perfect, and no way to Perfection but by being *Holy as GOD is Holy*, according to our proportion, and so far as we are capable of imitating His glorious Example. And sure we are mightily hurt by being commanded to be Godlike! for whatever we may think of Holiness, mere Heathens cou'd say, That GOD is not more Happy than Mortals but by how much He is more Just and Holy.

1 Thess. 4.
3.

1 Peter 1.
15.

109. Cou'd there have been a more excellent End than the Glory of GOD, that had been the End of the Creation: But the Glory of GOD, (which is not a mere empty show and noise like human Glory, but which consists in the Beauty and Perfection of His Works and Ways) being the best Design, all things were created for this purpose. The World was made for the Church, the Church for Christ its Head,

Head, the great High-Priest, the glorious Architect of a Spiritual Temple, to the honour of the Father, wherein GOD shall be worship'd with Pure and Holy Worship to all Eternity. Christ has been pleas'd to form the Materials of this Building, the Members of this Church, in divers manners, and by divers methods, that so every Spiritual Beauty may shine forth in it. The Tempers and Talents of Mankind are various, and so are the exercises of their graces, their trials and their conquests. Yet all the Works of GOD are Perfect in their kind, tho' all of them do not possess the same degree of Perfection, for this wou'd not consist with the Perfection of the Whole, which arises from the order and symmetry of the several parts; among which there wou'd be little or no beauty if there were no distinctions, no different degrees of Glory. And therefore, as we learn from that Apostle who had been in Heaven, and had seen it's unutterable Excellencies, *one Star differs from another Star in glory*, even where all are Glorious.

110. But yet Perfection was and must still be the Business of GOD's Church, from its infancy to it's consummation in Glory. Thus GOD instructed the Patriarchs, *Walk before Me and be* Gen. 17.

Psal. 19.
 3. 119.

2 Cor 6.

1.
 Heb. 2. 3.

Matth. 11.
 14.

Acts 23. 1.

Matth. 5.
 20.

Perfect. The Law of GOD, whether the Moral or Mosaical, each of them were *Perfect* in their kind, and so far as they went. These were excellent preparations for the Gospel, which is the last method GOD thinks fit to take with us in this World, to raise us to Perfection. And happy is it for us that we are born into it's Light, if we duly improve this advantage: As it will be most miserable if we *receive the Grace of GOD in vain, and neglect so great Salvation.* He who is least under the Gospel Dispensation, is greater than the greatest under the other Oeconomies: And that degree of Vertue which rendred *David* a Man after GOD's own Heart, will not be sufficient to raise a Christian to that most glorious Title. The Scribes and Pharisees were very punctual in observing the Law, and tho' too many of them were mere out-sides, yet we have no Reason to conclude that they were all Hypocrites. *Saul* to be sure was none, but tho' he was a mistaken Zealot, yet as he tells us, he *serv'd GOD with a good Conscience and in Sincerity.* And yet our Lord assures us, That *unless our Righteousness exceeds the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, we are not Christians.*

III. To be a Christian is a greater thing, and a more honourable Character than

than most of us imagine; but as all real honour is attended with difficulty and dangers, so they must not expect to be exempt from Combats who engage in the Christian Warfare, and list themselves under the Banner of a Crucify'd Saviour. *The Disciple is not above His Master, nor the Servant above his Lord.* Matth. 10. 24, 25. What greater Honour can the Disciple expect than to be as his Master? or the Servant than to be made like unto his Lord? There is no Quarter to be had in this War, we must Conquer or Die; nor any Victory to be obtain'd but by following the Captain of our Salvation, who for the Joy that was set before Him endur'd the Cross, despising the Shame, and was made Perfect by Sufferings. Heb. 12. 2. & 5. 8, 9.

112. Your Ladiship sees I have pursu'd a warlike Metaphor, which we frequently meet with in Holy Writ. But *the Weapons of our Warfare are not Carnal,* 2 Cor. 10. 4. they enable us indeed to Conquer the World, and which is more, our selves, but all this without doing violence to any Person. A Woman may put on the whole Armor of GOD without degenerating into a Masculine Temper; she may take the Shield of Faith, the Sword of the Spirit, the Helmet of Salvation, and the Breast-plate of Righteousness without any offence to the Men, and they become

Ephes. 6.
11, &c.

her as well as they do the greatest Hero. I cou'd never understand why we are bred Cowards; sure it can never be because our Masters are afraid we shou'd Rebel, for Courage wou'd enable us to endure their Injuries, to forgive and to despise them! It is indeed so necessary a Vertue that we can't be good Christians without it; for till we are got above the fear of Death, 'tis in any bodies power to make us renounce our hopes of Heaven. And it can't be suppos'd that Men envy us our Portion there; since however desirous they are to engross *this* World, they do not seem so Covetuous of *the other*.

113. But let us leave them to their Conquests whilst we push on in ours; and with undaunted Bravery pursue the great Design of Christianity, by advancing to the utmost degree of Perfection of which Human Nature is capable. There may be difficulties indeed, but what do they signify, considering the present Assistance, and the future Reward? If it be enquir'd whence these difficulties arise, we shall find that it is *the Corruptible Body that presseth down the Soul*; and that the objects of Sense are the cause of our Imperfection, and the exercise of our Vertue. Humane Nature always desires Happiness, and places its
Happiness

Happiness in that which pleases; sensible Pleasures being present, intrude upon us and will be attended: Whereas Spiritual Pleasures tho' unspeakably greater, are more remote, they must be sought after and waited for. Therefore the main business of those who aspire to Perfection, a very laudable and necessary Ambition, is to throw off the prejudices of Sense, which have nothing to plead but the prepossessions of Childhood; to free themselves from the false relish of present Pleasures; to raise their Affections above *the Things that are seen*, and ^{2 Cor. 4.} which are but Vain and Temporal, that ^{18.} they may fix them upon *Things which* tho' at present they *are not seen*, are yet certain, infinitely satisfying, and *Eternal*: In a word, to *Live by Faith and not by Sense*.

114. Now what can be so admirably well fitted to this Divine End, as the Precepts and Example of our Great Master? which express the greatest contempt of all that Worldly Minds prize and doat on, and which despise and trample on all that they fear. At least if I understand the Gospel, this is what it teaches us, whatever we may be taught by one another. As might be easily shewn from the whole Tenor of the New Testament, and particularly from
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our Lord's Divine Sermon on the *Mount*, which is not a collection of a few scatter'd Precepts, but which with admirable Order, Beauty, and a Divine force of Reasoning, tends to disengage our Thoughts from *this* World, and to inspire us with a noble Ardor in the pursuit of the Glories and Felicities of the *next*. How come we then to frame another Gospel? and to take to our selves the honorable Name of Christians, tho' we mind little else but what we renounc'd at our Baptism? Christ came to raise us above these little and low pursuits, but we are sunk and lost in them! And if any thing, by the Grace of GOD, revives the Life and Vigour of Christianity, it must be that which some are pleas'd, tho' very unjustly, to call Pride; even a generous neglect of all Worldly Enjoyments, which are given us for our Use and Exercise, but ought not to be consider'd as our Good or our Reward.

115. To instance only in the Beatitudes, we find, That our Lord pronounces them *Blessed*, whose Actions and Sense of things are directly opposite to Worldly-minded Men. For thus, like *Job's* Friends we call the Rich Happy, and laugh the Poor Upright Person to Scorn; whereas those who don't value themselves

selves upon what Worldlings esteem are by our Lord pronounc'd *Blessed*, as being Inheritors of the true Riches, *Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*. We will not be perswaded that the *House of Mourning is better than the House of Laughter*, but wou'd always live in Mirth and Jollity: Our Lord tells us, That *they who sow in Tears shall reap in Joy*; that those who *Mourn* and whom we reckon Afflicted, are indeed the Happy People, *for they shall receive Solid Comfort*. We imagine the World will trample on us unless we Resent Injuries: But the Lamb of GOD assures us, That the way to be Happy, even in this World, is to be *Meek*; that Revenge will continue and encrease Injuries, and that he who passes them by, both possesses his own Soul in Patience, whereby he is in an impregnable Fortrefs, and even secures to himself an *Inheritance in the Earth*. We have eager Appetites after sensible Objects, and place our Felicity in gratifying them: But our Lord informs us, that an *earnest desire after Righteousness* is the only way to Happiness, for in this only we shall receive no disappointment. We generally look no further than our selves, and so we are at ease and secure, we consider not what others suffer: Our Lord wou'd have us know, That the *same measure we mete, shall*

*shall be measur'd to us, and that the only way to obtain Mercy is to be Merciful. Sensual Pleasure possesses our Hearts, we fancy our selves undone without it: Whereas our Lord declares that Purity makes us Blessed, qualifying us for the highest Transport of Delight, the Vision of G O D. Animosities, Contentions, and Victories pass with us for mighty matters, and he has the loudest Fame who has done most mischief to Mankind: But the SON of GOD, the Fountain of true Honour, bestows the highest Title on the contrary Temper, pronounces the *Peace-makers Blessed*, and calls them the *Children of G O D*. Nothing frights us so much as Persecution, Flesh and Blood we think is not able to endure it, and what wou'd we not do rather than take up the Cross of Christ? But our Divine Master is very plain with us, as He assures us of His Assistance, which will render us Blessed even under our Persecutors hands, so He lets us know that He promises no Crown without a Cross, if we refuse to *suffer with Him* in this World, we must not expect to *Reign with Him* in His Heavenly Kingdom.*

116. So different are the Morals and Views of our Lord from those of Modern Christians, that whilst these abhor nothing

thing so much as *suffering for Righteousness sake*, and had rather do the greatest Evil than endure the least; our Blessed Saviour commands us to *Rejoice and be exceeding glad* when we are Persecuted; and wou'd not have us look upon Persecutions as a Calamity or matter of Grief, but as an opportunity of obtaining the *greatest Blessing*. In a word, what can pour a greater contempt upon this World and all its Enjoyments, what can be a fuller or more sensible Proof that all it's offers are very despicable, than the manifestation of the SON of GOD in the Flesh, and the circumstances of His Appearing among us? a Proof that strikes even the meanest and grossest Capacities, a Proof that condescends to our very Senses.

117. It is not improbable that among many other wise Reasons for which GOD was pleas'd to establish the *Jewish* Oeconomy, one was to convince Mankind experimentally, this being the only way of convincing most People, how little Temporal Enjoyments contribute to Human Happiness, and that the Mind can't be satisfy'd with any good but what is Spiritual and Eternal; cannot indeed but be miserable in the midst of all outward affluence, unless it has some Relish and Enjoyment of such a good. The
Jews

Jews enjoy'd the greatest Worldly Felicity, and yet they were far from being an happy, an easie, or contented People; no Nation more apt to murmur, or to fall into the grossest Follies. Even *Solomon* who is represented as at the very top of Worldly Bliss, and who amidst all this Prosperity, had *great experience of Wisdom and Knowledge*, which is more than can be said of most People in his circumstances; yet even this Great, this Wise, this Happy King, if any thing in this World cou'd have made him so, pronounces all to be *Vanity!* and not only *Vanity* which is bad enough, but which is worse, *Vexation of Spirit!* Nor cou'd all his Wisdom great as it was, and much above our pretensions, defend him from the poison and mischiefs of Prosperity; none having acted more Foolishly, with Reverence to His Majesty and to the Sacred Text be it spoken, than this Wise and Mighty Man! Which is a lasting evidence that Prosperity, how apt soever we may be to presume on our own skill to manage it, is of infinite danger, even to the wisest and the best, and can't be tasted by those who have no mind to be ruin'd by it, but with great caution and fear, and a continual watch over themselves, which is enough, one wou'd think, to spoil it's relish.

118. But

118. But Prosperity and those sensible Pleasures which it affords, are what Mankind runs madding after. And tho' Reason, if duly attended, offers motives enow to check this wild career, yet nothing but the Grace of G O D can effectually restrain it. The *Jews* indeed were under great difficulties, Temporal Blessings were promis'd them, and consequently they were allow'd to desire and pursue them. And yet even under *their* dispensation 'tis observable, That the Favorites of GOD, the Men of *whom the World* Heb. 11. *was not worthy, were destitute* of all Worldly Comfort, *Afflicted, Tormented, and receiv'd not the Promise in this Life.* But GOD has been more gracious to us Christians than He was to the *Jews*, and has done all that is consistent with the Nature He has given us, to set us right in this matter. We have in the New Testament, *Precept upon Precept, Line upon Line*, to disengage us from the love of *1 S. John* *the World and the things that are in it,* 2. 15. which are said to be inconsistent with the *Love of the Father.* But which is above all, and one wou'd think is an irresistible Argument, we have the Example of the SON of G O D, who cou'd as easily have been Born in the Court of *Augustus* as in a Stable, and who cou'd have commanded all the Pleasures and
Grandeurs

Grandeurs this World affords, without being hurt by them, had Prosperity been either best in it self, or best for us.

Col. 3. 2, 3. 119. To recount all the benefits we receive by *setting our Affections on things above, and not on things on the Earth*, were to enumerate all the Felicity that Mankind is capable of in this Life, and all the glorious Hopes of the next. We shall be dead to the World its true, but then we shall live an infinitely better Life; for *our Life is hid with Christ in G O D*. Matth. 6. 19, &c. Nor can we be sure that our *Treasure is in Heaven*, any other way than by having our *Hearts there*, and by being thus dead to all other things. Which will give us a foretaste and earnest of that Blessed Life, without the hopes of which this present Life and all it can afford, is not so much as tolerable. A truth which I am sure they will witness, who have so much Resolution and Nobleness of Mind as to make the Experiment, nor will they ever repent the Trial; in the mean time let them take your Ladiship's word for't, if they have no confidence in mine.

120. But too justly did our Lord reproach us with the *Children of this World's being Wiser in their Generations than the Children of Light*. For no time,

no Care, no Pains, is thought too much for the acquisition of Honour, or Pleasure, or Riches, tho' we may be taken from them very soon, and are sure we cannot long possess them. The making their Fortune as Men call it; or with us Women the setting ours to sale, and the dressing forth our selves to purchase a Master; and when we have got one, that which we very improperly term our Business, the Oeconomy of his and our own Vanity and Luxury, or Covetousness, as the humor happens, has all the application of our Minds; we watch all advantages, improve all accidents, and let no opportunity slip us. But the other World is out of sight, and for this reason out of mind; 'tis enough if we think of it hereafter, when we are at leisure, and have dispatch'd all the other worthy and grand Affairs! The People with whom we transact won't stay for us; the present Occasion if lost can't be retriev'd: GOD will have Patience, at least He must, if He means us any Favour; and tho' perhaps we have a little more Reverence than to say *let Him wait*, yet we make no scruple to proclaim it, without a Blush, by our Actions.

121. I conclude therefore, That the main thing in order to a Christian Life, is to look upon the Service of GOD and
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the Salvation of our Souls, as our *only Business*. All other things, except as they relate to this, being mere Impertinencies; too frequently a Sinful, often a Vain, and at best but an Innocent Amusement. For it can never be suppos'd that GOD Created us, that is our Minds, after His own Image, for no better purpose than to wait upon the Body, whilst it Eats, Drinks, and Sleeps, and faunters away a *Useless Life*; or to forget themselves so far as to be plung'd into the Cares of a *Busy* one. GOD, whose Works are all in Number, Weight, and Measure, cou'd never form a Rational Being for so trivial a purpose; since a little more Mechanism than what He has bestow'd upon some Brutes, wou'd qualifie us sufficiently for those Employments, even for the very best Affairs that this World, separate from the next and without any relation to it, is capable of.

122. Shall I then receive the Bounty of GOD in vain? GOD forbid! and therefore did I know or cou'd find out, a nobler Employment than the making my Calling and Election sure, Woman tho' I am, I wou'd employ all my Thoughts and Industry to compass it. For if to pursue the best Design, to strive to be as Perfect as I can, is Pride
and

and Ambition, 'tis what I must never correct, but rather pray for its continuance. And I know not a more melancholy consideration, than that one meets with so few of these Proud and Ambitious Spirits, (if this must be the Character by which the World distinguishes them) who might provoke us to push onward in our Christian Race, not by pulling them back, which nothing but the Envy of a Devil wou'd attempt, but by assisting them to the utmost of ones power to obtain their Crown.

123. Having thus consider'd the Excellence and Importance of the Christian Profession, computed the Expences of this Work, and weigh'd the Difficulties of this Warfare; difficulties which be they as great as they may, bear no proportion to the Assistance afforded, or the magnificent Reward that attends the overcoming of them. The next thing to be done, is to fix on the best method of pursuing this glorious Design, to adhere to't with an immovable Resolution, and to pursue it with unwearied Vigour; for sure one can't content themselves with taking such a Course as may or may not do, and which can give them no comfortable and well grounded hope, at that awful day when all other Consolations fail them!

124. Now in order to this, I make it my business to get as clear and exact a knowledge of the whole Will of GOD Reveal'd to us, as possibly I can, and of the best way and manner of performing it; endeavouring to fix in my Mind clear, distinct, and just notions of all those Sins He has forbid. and all those Duties He has Commanded, and all this not for Speculation but Practice. For as the knowledge of GOD's Will won't at all avail me, but only encrease my Condemnation unless I do it; so neither can I do GOD's Will unless I know it; nor am I like to know it by loose and confus'd Ideas. Your Ladyship must needs have observ'd pretty often, That many Persons who seem to Profess the Christian Religion in Sincerity, do yet indulge themselves in Practices which sure they wou'd not dare to continue in did they believe them Sins; and omit many acts of Vertue, which sure they wou'd not dispense with did they believe them Duties. Hence it is that the best of us are so afraid to Die, for tho' we have perform'd our Duty in some measure, yet we are conscious of having done it very carelessly and after a sorry manner. And by this also appears the mischief of being engag'd in the Follies and Cares of this present Life, for it is
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from this engagement that we want leisure to examine the Precepts of the Gospel so nicely and accurately, and to imprint them in our Minds, as we ought.

125. I must not pretend to consider this Subject at large, and according to its merit, but shall only give a definition or short description of the Principal, and the most Neglected, Christian Duties, or of the opposite Sins. Taking my accounts from Scripture only, as I understand it, tho' perhaps I may not always fall in with the Opinions of some, and seldomer with the Practice of the greatest number of Christians. And having constantly in view the Design of our Holy Religion, which, as was said above, is to withdraw our Hearts as much as possible from Temporal things, and hereby to advance us to the utmost degree of Perfection that we are able to attain.

126. A *Duty* is much the same as a Debt; it is that which in Reason and Justice we are oblig'd to Pay, and by the neglect of which we shall incur a Penalty. Sin is the reverse of this, or as the Apostle defines it, *Sin is the Transgression of the Law*, that is of any Law of GOD, whether Natural or Reveal'd. And this may be either directly or indirectly, against the plain and obvious let-

1 S. John
3. 4.
Rom. 4.
15.

ter of the Law, or the just and necessary consequence. Hence disobedience to any Command of a Lawful Superior which is not contrary to the Commands of GOD, is indeed a breach of GOD's Law which enjoins obedience to just Authority, and in this respect it is a Sin, as well as it is a Crime with relation to Human Sanctions. Unless the Human Law proposes a Mulct as an Equivalent to obedience, in which case upon payment of the Mulct the Conscience is discharg'd from the Sin, as well as the Person from the Crime. But it must be observ'd, That when the Penalty is not propos'd by Human Laws as an Equivalent to Obedience, but as a Punishment for the neglect of it, in this case, our having suffer'd the Punishment does not excuse us from the Guilt, or the Sin. But until we have Repented we are obnoxious to GOD's Vengeance, even tho' we have satisfy'd Man's.

127. We usually distinguish our Duties into such as are due to GOD, to our Neighbours, and to our Selves; but this is only for order's sake. For the obligation is the same in all, since we can only be oblig'd in Conscience by the Sanctions of the Divine Law; and the Duties themselves are so happily link'd, that he who wou'd perform any of them as he ought,

ought, must needs perform them all. Abstractions how useful soever in Speculation, because we can't have just and accurate notions of things without them, are yet very dangerous in Practical Divinity, where to abstract and divide is to destroy. They don't effectually or to any purpose Believe who don't Practice, and they can never Practice as they ought who don't Believe. He who does not discharge the Duties of a Rational and Sociable Creature, in Obedience to the Commands of the Divine Law-giver, will discharge them no longer than suits with his own Humour and serves his own turn. As on the other hand, we can neither Serve GOD nor our selves by injuring our Neighbour; nor can we violate our Duty to GOD and to our Neighbour, without doing the highest Injury to our selves.

128. Hence are those general expressions or summaries of our Duty, which we meet with in Holy Scripture, where sometimes Faith, sometimes Faith and Repentance, or the Love of GOD, or the Love of our Neighbour, or any other Particular Duty, is put for the Whole of Religion, or the terms of Salvation. It being certain, That no Person who does *indeed* Believe the great

Truths of the Gospel, but will set himself in earnest to perform those conditions upon which Eternal Happiness is to be obtain'd, and Eternal Misery to be avoided. He can't be said to be truly sorry for past Faults, who does not use his utmost endeavours to be guilty of them no more. It is a jest to talk of Loving GOD whilst we wilfully offend Him, or do not strive to please and long to enjoy Him. And as they who truly Love GOD will Love their Neighbour for GOD's sake, this being one of the principal Evidences of our Love to Him: So whatever pretences may be made to Friendship or Public-Spiritedness, 'tis certain, and he who tries them long enough will find, that except upon a Religious Principle and out of Love to GOD, Men will not Love their Neighbour. They will not do to Mankind all the good that is in their power, which is the only true Love of our Neighbour. That which they call doing good, and which may be so far good as to be a service to those who receive it, being only done to have a hawk upon them, or for the doers Humor, or Interest, or to serve his Party, to be rid of Importunity, or out of shame to do less than other Men have done, or for Ostentation, or perhaps by Chance, or some such Motive
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which will not hold Universally, nor carry him to the performance of this Duty in its true and utmost extent. So that he can't truly be said to Love his Neighbours, any more than he can be said to Love GOD whatever he may profess, or whatever passions he may feel, who lives in the violation of *any* of GOD's Laws. According to that of St. James, *Whosoever shall keep the whole Law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.* James 2.
10.

He has not the true vital Principle of Obedience, but is ready to break all the rest, as soon as ever an apposite Temptation is thrown in his way. So then, tho' for methods sake our Duties must be distinguish'd, they can't be so separated but that the one will very often Include, and will always have an Influence on the other,

129. It must also be observ'd, That the *Christian* Religion is not opposite to *Natural* and *Mosaical* Religion, but is an Improvement of both. Of the former by setting its Precepts in a clearer Light, enforcing them with stronger Motives, raising them to higher degrees of Perfection, and in a word, filling up whatever was wanting: of the other, by bringing the Substance into the place of Shadows. But that which is peculiar to the Christian Religion is, the explicate knowledge of the Mediator JESUS CHRIST, and the Worshipping of
GOD

GOD by and thro' Him. Christianity sets before us as the object of our Worship the SON of GOD in the Nature of Man, the Mediator of a New and Excellent Covenant; and the Holy SPIRIT of GOD the Principle of a New and Spiritual Life, by whose Assistance we have Access to the Father, for the Merits and Sake of CHRIST. And it being the declar'd Will of GOD that He will be thus Worship'd, those to whom the Christian Law is Promulg'd, can't Worship Him acceptably any other way. Nor can they expect Salvation without an explicit Faith in the Mediator, and in the Sanctifier of the Human Race. As is plain from the New Testament, a great part of which wou'd be transcrib'd did I bring all the Proof it affords, and therefore I shall leave it to your Ladiship's own Observation as you read the Holy Scripture.

130. The Duty which we owe more Immediately to GOD, does in general consist in having worthy Thoughts of Him, and in a demeanor fuitable to these Thoughts, in serving Him with that Purity and Simplicity of Mind, that Intire and Constant Obedience and Zeal, that is due to the Searcher and Judge of Hearts, to the Sovereign Lord of All things, to Him upon whom we entirely depend.

depend for All we have or are, for every Moment of our Being. But I shall not consider our Duty to GOD as He is our Creator and Preserver, for this is a Relation that all other Creatures have to Him as well as we; I shall rather derive our Duty from His being our Redeemer, and from the Purchase Christ has made of us by His Blood, which is the Principle, and the Foundation of the Christian Religion, is a Motive of the tenderest endearment, requiring a return of the greatest Love and the most entire devotion to His Service. So that the sum of our Duty is Faith, such as the Apostle defines it, *A Faith working by Love*; and this Love what our Lord describes, a Love that shews it self by Obedience; and this Obedience so Uniform, so Constant, so Zealous, as the Belief and Love of GOD, *GOD manifested in the Flesh*, requires. Faith sets before us an Object worthy of our Love, Love stirs us up to Obedience and endears it to us. Without Obedience we must not pretend to Love GOD, and without Love 'tis certain we can never Serve Him as we ought; nor can we either Obey or Love unless we Believe. Disobedience proceeds from a want of Love, as this does from a want of Faith. So that Faith will be found to be more necessary in order

Gal. 5. 6.

Joh. 14. 15,

21.

Rom. 14.

7, &c.

Eph. 2.

1 Tim. 3.

16,

order to good Morals, and to the delivering us from the *prevailing power of Sin*, than some are pleas'd to make it.

131. Now Faith is here taken for a Belief that *GOD Is, and that He is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him*; and for a firm perswasion of the Truth of all that is Reveal'd in the Holy Scripture. More especially of that which is the great Fundamental of Christianity, That *G O D has sent His only Begotten Son into the World that we might Live thro' Him*. To Believe that there is a GOD is to Believe that He is the *Best* Being, Infinite in all Perfections, our true and only Good. To think worthily of G O D, is to think of Him according to that Perception of Himself which He always exhibits to those Minds that Reverently and Attentively turn towards Him; and according to what He has declar'd of Himself in His Holy Word, not according to any devices or wishes of our own. And if we thus Believe and often consider the necessary consequences of this Faith, affecting our Minds therewith, it will engage us in all other Duties. For it will convince us that our All ought to be dedicated to G O D's Service; that it is not only most becoming, and our just and bounden Duty, but even our greatest Interest, to pay the utmost Submission

Heb. 11.
6.

1 S John
4. 9.

mission to His Will and Obedience to all His Commands. And this not only formally and outwardly, but sincerely and affectionately, with an entire devoting of our Understandings and Wills, and all our Powers and Faculties to His Service.

132. Especially since to endear our Duty and render it most easie and delightful, GOD has been pleas'd to manifest His Love to us in a most amazing manner, by the Incarnation and Death of His Son: Assuring us hereby that we are allow'd to Love Him; that our Love will be acceptable to Him; and that as He only *Is*, He only *Can be* our Felicity, so we may assure ourselves that He is not only willing, but even desirous to impart Himself to us. The Manifestation of the SON of GOD in the Flesh, as it is the greatest evidence that cou'd be given, both of the evil of Sin and GOD's infinite hatred of it; and also of His infinite Love to Mankind and readiness to Pardon them: So it is a *Sensible* Argument, and what the most *Simple* and *Illiterate* may understand.

133. Such a neglect both of the terrors and allurements of this Mortal Life; such a contempt of this World and all its Glory; and which is more, such a
willing

willing and chearful enduring of the Cross, the Cross which Christians now a-days, to their shame be it spoken, are so much afraid of; such an abstraction from sensual Pleasure, such an elevation of Mind towards our true and only good, as is indeed the Perfection of Human Nature, was not expected from Mankind till Life and Immortality were brought to light by the Gospel, and that the SON of GOD in the Form of Man, had by His own most Illustrious Example, directed our steps and plain'd the way. But if JESUS had been only a mere Man, how Wise and Good soever, it had been no great matter for one in those poor and mean Circumstances He was pleas'd to appear in, to suffer what He endur'd.

134. Strictly speaking, we do not *Believe* there is a GOD, but we *Know* there is one, tho' I am here speaking of our Acknowledgment of GOD as a matter of Faith, in compliance with common usage, and because Faith is the most comprehensive term, taking in all that we are to acknowledge concerning GOD. For tho' Faith is ultimately founded upon Reason, it being most rational to Believe what GOD declares, yet such Truths as we cou'd not have come at by the common methods of Meditation and Discourse

Discourse, nor otherwise than by GOD's particular Revelation, are very properly said to be Believ'd, not in contradiction to Reason, but by way of difference and distinction. Nor is this any more than what daily happens in common affairs, there being some Truths which are demonstrated to us, such as Mathematical Propositions; others, such as matters of Fact, which we must either be ignorant of, or receive them upon the credit of the Relator. Nay, even Mathematical Truths tho' capable of demonstration, can only be said to be believ'd, and are not known, by him who does not acquaint himself with the demonstration. And perhaps all People are not capable of a demonstration, to be sure there are too many who will not take the pains to know. Tho' to speak my Thoughts freely, I take GOD to be the same to the Mind that light is to the Eyes, with this difference, that the Intellectual Sun never Sets. And as he who has the Organs of Seeing and will use them, cannot but perceive the Light, so he who uses his Reason can't but perceive the Existence of GOD, which is so bright and obvious a Truth that it manifests its self to all Understandings. The very meanest among them who are capable of any sort of employment may
come

come at this great Truth, if they will but apply themselves to it as they do to their Worldly Business, and may deduce all other necessary Truths from this. In a word, all that we discover concerning GOD by Natural Reason, is Knowledge; and all that we learn of Him from Holy Scripture and receive upon its Authority, is Faith. Nor is Faith less certain, that is less credible, or a more insufficient ground of assent, than Knowledge. For I am not less certain of that which, as I learn from Revelation, GOD knows to be True, than I am of that which I myself know to be True; Nay rather more certain, provided I know the Truth of the Revelation. Because GOD can't be deceiv'd, He Himself is *the Truth*, and He thoroughly Understands it, whereas I have not a full and comprehensive view of Ideas, my view is often attended with obscurity, so that many times I cannot clearly, and seldom fully, perceive their Agreement or Disagreement.

135. Scripture and our Natural Notions of GOD, do each of them inform us, That as He can't be deceiv'd Himself, so it is not possible for Him to deceive His Creatures; as He can't be hurt, so He neither can nor will do them injury; That He gives without our Desert, but He never Chastises but for our Demerit;

Demerit ; That He Rewards purely because it is His good Pleasure, but He Punisheth because He must, that is, because the Eternal Reason of things requires His Vengeance. Our Sins are in some respect the natural as well as the meritorious cause of our Misery, but the Goodness of GOD is the only Reason why He does us Good. For Creatures who depend upon their Creator in the most absolute manner, can't possibly deserve any thing from His Bounty, much less can Sinners, whose Iniquities set them at a distance from their GOD. All our Good, both what we do and what we enjoy, is entirely from Him ; all the Evil that we do is absolutely and entirely from our selves, and by consequence we draw upon our own Heads all the Evil that we suffer. It follows therefore that we assent to all GOD's Declarations and Revelations as True, that we receive His Promises as Faithful, His Threatnings as Just, and His Commands as Holy, Wise, and Good, and conform our selves to them in all things.

136. Which consider'd simply in it self is no hard matter, for it is no more than the doing what is fit, much less can it be difficult to those who Love. Now Love is the natural effect of Faith, for whoever is acquainted with so amiable

a Being as the Lord our GOD, must needs be enamour'd with Him. And whether Love be consider'd as the motion of the Soul towards good, or as a passion, or as that delight we take in reflecting on that which pleases, 'tis certain that Love will be the effect of true Faith, and will produce Obedience.

1 Cor. 8. So thought our Lord and His Apostle, *if*
3. *any Love GOD, says St. Paul, the same is known of him*, there needs no more than Knowledge to excite Love, and Love to encrease Knowledge; and our Saviour makes obedience the test of Love, *if ye*

S. John 14. *Love me, says He, keep my Commandments.*
15. Ye do not indeed Love unless ye Obey; and Obedience will be but a forc'd and ungrateful Task, neither easie to our selves nor acceptable to GOD, unless it proceeds from Love.

137. But we are not agreed it seems wherein this Love consists, nor what is the extent of it. I need not repeat to your Ladiship my thoughts in this matter; and shall leave it to your own Judgment, and to every equitable Person, whether the affirming GOD to be the sole Object of our Love, as Love imports the motion, especially voluntary motion and tendency of the Mind to its true good, be so *unserviceable* to Religion, such a *perplexing the Duties of Morality*,

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concerning
the Love
of GOD,
Preface:*

ality, and rendering them impractical, *Also p. 19.*
 and in fine, so very dangerous as to *77. 119.*
 shake and unsettle the grounds of true *&c.*
 Piety, as some wou'd represent it. All
 the proof they have hitherto brought to
 make good these heavy Accusations, as
 far as I can see, amounting to no more,
 than that they mistake the matter and
 fight with their own shadows; or that it
 is not a generally receiv'd opinion; *and*
that every Man's experience confutes this *Ibid. p. 29.*
every day. Which last I allow them, just *92.*
 so much and no more than they will al-
 low me, That *the daily sense and experi-*
ence of Mankind disproves what a great
 Philosopher asserts when he tells us, That *See Ess.*
Flame is not *Hot and Light*, nor *Snow* *concerning*
White and Cold, nor *Manna White and* *Human*
Sweet: For the most of those whom we *Underst.*
 discourse about the matter, will neither *B. 2. c. 8.*
 be convinc'd by his Authority, nor which
 is more by his Reasons, which they
 think they have sufficiently answer'd
 when they oppose to them what they
 call their Sense and their Experience.

Ibid. p. 29,
92.

See Ess.
concerning
Human
Underst.
B. 2. c. 8.

138. This is not a place to take notice, how those who are so severe upon their Neighbours for being wanting (even in Private Letters writ without a design of being Publish'd) in that exactness of *Expression* which ought to be found in *Philosophical Disquisitions*, do

Discourse of the Love of GOD, p. 27.

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27.

themselves confound the notion of Love
 with the sentiment of Pleasure, by ma-
 king Love to *consist barely in the act of the*
Mind towards that which pleases. I shall on-
 ly observe, as more proper to my pre-
 sent Business, That the Love of our E-
 nemies is by no means consistent with
 that account of Love that is given by
 our great Men, nor even possible upon
 their Principles. For they tell us, That
 Love is nothing else but that disposition of
 Mind we find in our selves towards any thing
 we are pleas'd with; and that without this
 Principle of Love to our Neighbour, we can't
 discharge what we owe to him, and that
 Wishing-well is not Love, but a different
 act consequent to Love. Now if we can-
 not Love but what we are pleas'd with, and
 that it is certain, for Reason, as well as
 the Experience of Mankind, assures us,
 That we cannot be pleas'd with our E-
 nemies, consequently we cannot Love
 them. Love, according to our Author,
 naturally draws desire after it, and they who
 say we ought not to be so pleas'd, deny that we
 ought to Love. For we cannot Love but
 what we are pleas'd with; therefore, say I,
 if our Authors account of Love be right,
 we must either be pleas'd with our Ene-
 mies, or we must not Love them. And
 if it is not possible to be pleas'd with
 them, it is also impossible to Love them.

139. Suppose our Enemy is a Persecutor, and does invade that *Fundamental, Sacred and unalterable Law of Self-preservation*, as some call it, Persecution *Two Treatises of Government, B. 2. S. 149.* is no way desirable to us according to their Principles, and much less the Persecutor; so that it is manifestly impossible and contradictory that we shou'd rejoice and take complaisance in him. Now if we Love our Neighbour as our selves, their Being and Well-being must necessarily be desirable to us. *Discourse of the Love of GOD, p. 50. P. 18.* But the Being and much less the Well-being of a Persecutor can't be desirable. A Persecutor who wou'd deprive us of our dear and desirable Estates, Offices and Employments, our dearer Lives perhaps, (over which we our selves have no power, therefore how shou'd he come by't, tho' we invested him with all the power we had, on condition he kept his compact?) and as we say, our dearest Religion! It is therefore utterly impossible, if the former Principles be true, and contrary to the Nature of things, to Love a Persecutor. We may wish him so well indeed, as to deprive him of the power to Persecute, we may tye his hands, or to make sure work, throw him out if we are able, in great kindness to him and in a little to our selves without question! But none of this is Love, for according to our Author *Treatise of Government, B. 2. S. 23.*

ing well is not *Loving*, tho' it may follow from Love. And besides it is not a little Paradoxical, and a Thought that none cou'd have fallen into but those free thinkers who are got above the *Alms Basket*, and the slavish Principles of former Christians, to suppose we wish well to a Man when we do him all the hurt we can! But to submit to and bear with a Persecutor, *the common Enemy and Pest of Mankind*, much more to delight, to rejoice, and take complaisance in him, is contrary to all Sense and Reason, to *our Just and Natural Rights*, and can go down with none but *such servile Flatterers*, who wou'd have all Men born to what their mean Souls has fitted them, *Slavery*.

Ib. Sect.
239.

Matth. 5.
44.
*Discourse
of the
Love of
GOD, p.
57.*

140. And yet for all this, so it happens, That Christ has commanded us to *Love our Enemies*, even our Persecutors, if our Translation of the Bible is good; and we know *GOD has laid no traps or snares to render us Miserable, nor does He require Impossible Performances from us*. It follows then, That either the Translators, out of Slavish Principles, and to curry Favour with that Arbitrary Prince who employ'd them in that Translation, have corrupted the Sacred Text: Or else that every thing is not True which we find in the *Discourses* of

of our Modern Authors, who not only refine upon Philosophy, by which they do Service to the World; and upon Politicks, by which they mean to Serve their Party; but even upon Christianity it self, pretending to give us a more *Reasonable* Account of it, by which they mean somewhat more agreeable to their Genius and own Conveniency, for their Systems, so far as I can find, do no manner of *Service to decaying Piety, and mistaken and slander'd Christianity.*

141. It must needs be a strange kind of Love to Enemies that is without any sort of desire or good-will, since by their own Confession, *so far as the object of our* Ib. p. 50.
Love admits of both, Love is never without them. And according to their Systems, the Love of Enemies, of Persecutors at least, is not among *those admir'd and beneficial Vertues that support and profit* p. 123.
Society. Tho' according to others, the Peace of the World is promoted by nothing so much as by the Meek, Forgiving, and if one durst say it, the *Passive Doctrines* which are in a most peculiar manner the Doctrines of the Gospel. But *certainly to perswade Men that GOD requires* p. 119.
what they find Impossible to perform, or which is the same thing, to say, That what GOD has Commanded is *opposite to their very Constitution and Being in this World, is to*

make Religion, and, so far as we can, the Author as well as the Teachers of it Ridiculous, to render the Divine Law precarious, and to warp it upon all occasions to our own corrupt Affections and pretended Necessities.

142. Indeed if their account of Love be right, it is ridiculous to give any Precepts concerning it. For it is certain
 p. 17, 90. *we shall be pleas'd with that which pleases, whether or no it be commanded: And tho' we are enjoyn'd ever so often, it is not possible to be pleas'd with that which does not please.* So that if by *disposition of Mind towards that which pleases* be meant the bare sentiment of Pleasure, Love in this sense is no more in our power than the motion of our Pulse, and therefore can't be under command. But if by *act or disposition of Mind*, be meant the voluntary Motion of the Mind toward that which pleases, this is neither more nor less, than the particular determination of what others have call'd *the Original bent and endeavour of the Soul towards Good in general*; only this last is the better Expression because the clearer. For it is not to be suppos'd that the Men of the former way intend to affirm, That the Mind has any disposition to be pleas'd with Evil, or at least with any thing that appears so to it.

p. 50.

143. It

143. It is also to be observ'd, That whatever *Moses* and the *Jews* might understand by *Love*, they cou'd not take it in his Sense who writ the *Discourse concerning the Love of GOD*. For when it was said by *Moses*, *thou shalt Love thy Neighbour*, there cou'd be no Sense in what the *Jews* added, *and hate* Matth. 5. *thine Enemy*, if delight and complaisance 43. were meant by *Love*. For what occasion for an allowance to do that which must necessarily be done, or injunction not to do that which was impossible for them to do? For if *we necessarily Love* p. 88. *whatever is accompany'd with Pleasure*; we as necessarily hate whatever is accompany'd with Pain, or Displeasure. So that it need not be said to any People, especially not to the *Jews*, *Thou shalt Hate thy Enemy*, for *we need little caution* p. 17. *not to desire, or not to be pleas'd with that which is not desirable, or (which is here equivalent) not pleasing to us*. All which consider'd, as I *imagine*, (for one whose *Reason is weak* and *Imagination* p. 120. *stronger* must not pretend to *Understand*) there is a manifest Absurdity and contradiction somewhere, we are sure it is not in the Precepts of the Gospel, let those who are fallen into it get clear of it as they can. Whilst I make no scruple to say, without fear of losing my self in

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p. 27. a *Pompous Rhapsodie*, That the Soul debases her self, when she sets her affections on any thing but her Creator. It being a very vulgar way of speech that a Man debases himself, if being allow'd to make his Addresses to the Mistress he shou'd make Court to the Maid, even tho' she were his Equal, much more if she were very much his Inferior. And since

Esay. 40. the Courtly Prophet has said, That *All Nations are as nothing before GOD, and they are counted to Him less than nothing and vanity*, I am under no apprehensions that by saying the same thing, or to the same purpose, I have *Complimented GOD with the contempt of His Works*.

17.

Discourse, p. 27.

144. Some Men indeed have writ of Love, as if they knew nothing of it but what they learn from good Eating and the like sensations. And for Reasons to themselves best known, they write *Discourses* to perswade us, that we are under no necessity of taking our Affections off the Creature to place them solely on the Creator. Tho' the Holy Scripture

Col. 3. 2, requires us to *set our Affection on things above not on things on the Earth*, and for this Reason, because we are *Dead and our Life is hid with Christ in GOD*. Nor do I desire to stretch the Love of GOD further than the true Importance of this Text. My Ignorance in the Sacred Languages,

guages, besides all other disadvantages, makes me incapable of Expounding Scripture with the Learned; but this is certain, (or else we know nothing) That the Practical Christianity of the Apostles Phil. 3. 7, 8. and the Primitive Christians, was very different from what is Practis'd now a-days. For they gladly parted with *all* Acts 4. 34. *for the Gospel's sake*, and Rejoyc'd in nothing so much as *that they were counted* Acts 5. *worthy to suffer for the Name of Christ*, so 4^r. little fond were they of the Goods of this Life, or even of Life it self. Whereas we dread nothing more, I need not say *than resisting unto Blood, and taking up* Heb. 12. 4. *our Cross and following Christ*, but, than Matth. 16. 24, 25. running the least hazard, even in our Estates, thro' a firm adherence to the Truths of the Gospel. And because we do not Practise them, we take the boldness from hence to affirm, That they ought not to be Practis'd. The most Beautiful and Perfective Doctrines of our most Holy Religion, being ridicul'd and hooted out of the World by numbers and noise!

145. But to pass on and draw a veil over our shame——Suppose your Ladiship, or any other good Christian, is addicted to Study, or if the expression be more acceptable to any body, I will say *Loves Study*. And will also allow that

that you love it because it pleases. But why does it please? but because it enlarges and betters your Mind, by putting you in possession of Truth, which is your true Good, that is indeed of GOD Himself who is *the Truth and the Life*. Your Spirits fail and you grow faint, you Eat and Drink, or if they like it better, you *Love* to Eat and Drink upon this occasion; And why so? not for the mere pleasure of Eating and Drinking, this, I may say without a *Rhapsodie*, were below a Rational, much more a Christian, Mind. Tho' 'tis certain you feel Pleasure in it, and you thank GOD for it, since by this easie sensible way, without engaging your self in the troublesome Examination of the state of your Body and the suitableness of the nourishment, you Eat and Drink what will support it. But you do this only to keep your Body in Health that it may be able to serve your Mind, that both may serve their Redeemer, in which service all your Happiness consists. And as great Pains usually withdraw our attention from little ones, so do greater Pleasures extinguish our sense of the lesser. Having therefore upon your Mind that truly Rational and Sublime Pleasure, of approving your self to GOD and enjoying Him, you are not at leisure to attend the

the little poyancy of Meat and Drink, tho' the health and foundness of your Constitution makes these as relishing to you as to any body. If meditation and a just disquisition of Truth has carry'd you beyond the prejudices of sense, you are convinc'd that G O D is the True Efficient Cause of all our Good, of all our pleasing Sensations, and that without any reflection on the Purity of His Nature. You look thro' the Creature to the Creator as the Author of all your Delight, and thus every morsel gives a double Pleasure, considering the hand that feeds you, or to speak more correctly, the Power of G O D giving you divers modifications. And where is the hurt of all this, that our Modern Divines and Philosophers shou'd make such an out-cry against it, as if the Loving G O D in this manner were destructive of all Religion, and even of Morality, and wou'd do all those strange things the Learned are pleas'd to charge it with!

146. Among which, that which they seem most affraid of, is dispeopling the World, and driving Folks into *Monasteries*, tho' I see none among us for them to run into were they ever so much inclin'd; but have heard it generally complain'd of by very good *Protestants*, that *Monasteries* were Abolish'd instead of being Re-form'd:

form'd: And tho' none that I know of plead for Monasteries, strictly so call'd, in *England*, or for any thing else but a reasonable provision for the Education of one half of Mankind, and for a safe retreat so long and no longer than our Circumstances make it requisite. As is so plainly exprest in what has been said in this business, that none can mistake the meaning, without great disingenuity and an eager desire to cavil. But generous Designs for the Glory of GOD and the Good of Mankind, have been oppos'd in all Ages, (even by those who pretend to be the true Patriots) by suppos'd and far fetch'd dangers, and by misrepresentations to raise the Mob and Popular Prejudices against them, since Reason will not furnish out any Objection.

147. But may we not hope from the magnificence of a truly Glorious Prince, every Year of whose Reign may be reckon'd, not by the addition of new Ex-tortions and Oppressions to drain Her Subjects and enrich Foreigners, but by an encrease of new Bounties and Acts of Goodness to Her own People, as well as a Generous exertion of Her Power to Establish the Tranquility of *Europe*; That since Her Subjects in general have had so Liberal a Portion of Her Royal Beneficence, and the Clergy more particularly

cularly, an Act that will embalm Her Majesties Name to future Generations, and sound Her Praise louder than all the Ravages and Victories of Usurping and Ambitious Men, nay even than Her own Glorious Victories, truly Glorious in that they do not dispossess a Rightful Owner, but secure his Empire; *Whilst the Name of the Wicked* who dispossess Lawful Sovereigns, who destroy GOD's Heritage, and root up the Order and Government of His Church, *shall Rot*: May we not hope that She will not do less for Her own Sex than She has already done for the other; but that the next Year of Her Majesties Annals will bear date, from Her Maternal and Royal Care of the most helpless and most neglected part of Her Subjects. If She over-looks us we have no further prospect; for where-ever other People may carry their views, we of the *Church of England* have no hope beyond our *Present Sovereign*.

148. I have neither forgot nor forsaken my Subject by this seeming digression, for what but the Love of GOD can justly restrain Sovereign Princes from being Injurious, or excite them to be Just and Gracious to their People? Those who think the Awe of GOD's Sovereignty but a poor Restraint, and are therefore for Subjecting them to the Coercion of the People, against the Laws
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of this Nation as well as against the Doctrine of the Church, against Scripture, and Common Sense, shew too little regard to any Religion, whatever they may talk about it, to be look'd upon by any but a heedless Mob as its Defenders; and are *in truth*, what St. Paul and his Fellow Christians were *falsly* accus'd of being, *The Men that have turn'd the World upside down.*

149. *From whence come Wars and Fightings*, brawlings as the Margin reads, or in our Modern expression *Struggles for Power*, but from our *Pleasures*, our eager desires after Worldly things? And what remedy does the *Gospel of Peace* prescribe, but that we shou'd *use the World as not abusing it*. By which is meant, if we will allow the Scripture to explain it self, the *using the World as tho' we us'd it not*, being very indifferent, even mortify'd, dead to it, *that the Life of JESUS may be manifested in us.*

150. But certainly the way of using the World mention'd in the 145th. Paragraph, is more like to restrain us from abusing it, than if we shou'd say to our selves, why may not we *satisfy* our natural cravings with the good things of this World, which as we learn from the *Common Sense and Experience of Mankind*, as well as from the *Discourses of Great Men*, were given to be enjoy'd? And what need of troubling

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S. Jam. 4.
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1 Cor. 7.
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Rom. 8.
13.

Gal. 6. 14.
E 5. 24.

Rom. 6.
Colof. 3.
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p. 35.

our selves with those *severe Precepts* which none but *heads cast in Metaphysical Moulds* p. 35. can understand, and such as have *Privileges of Nature* can practice; which can't be talk'd of but by those whose *Imaginations* are stronger than their Reason, who fly out in an unintelligible way of *Pompous Rhapsodie* and *unpremeditated Raptures*, p. 27. carrying a show of some truth in the *Hears of the speaker* which they have not strictly in themselves? Do not we ask our selves whether we are willing to part with any other good for *G O D's sake*? and do we not answer we are willing? But thanks be to Providence and the *Love of Just and Natural Rights*, the trying times of the Gospel are past, we are deliver'd from that slavery, and as the World now goes, it is most for *G O D's Service* that we keep what we have got, and add as much to't as we can. For this enables us to be Patriots, to purchase Heads and Hands, and to Fight for Religion upon occasion; and in the mean while to do abundance of good to Mankind, by applying our selves to *all* their Inclinations whatever they be, that so we may bring them over to the Righteous side! We know we receive all our good from the hand of *G O D*, and this habitual knowledge is sufficient to secure our Duty, whilst we freely entertain our selves with the present

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p. 53.

p. 53, 54.

sent Pleasure, so grateful to our Senses, and which our Christian Liberty allows us! We shall be Wise enough to retreat in time, and to put a bridle on our desires when they grow inordinate. It may be difficult indeed for weak People to *proportion their desires to the worth of things*, when the object has got possession of their Hearts and strongly rais'd their Passions, but we are too experienc'd and too well resolv'd to be thus overcome. Tho' we *act suitable to our Nature and desire things that can be enjoy'd*, and thus go on in the *chace of pleasing Ideas*, yet we will not, no verily we will not be *led Captive by them*, but will keep them *under the government and direction of Reason*, which our indulg'd desires shall not at all impair!

p. 55, &c.
§ f. 125.

151. Were it not by such a process and way of arguing as this, there cou'd not be so much Sin and Folly in the World as we must needs complain of. For the Service of GOD is most Reasonable in its self, and indeed most delightful to a Rational Nature. But we are not at leisure to hearken to Reason, being taken up with pleasing Sensations and the present Pleasure whatever it be. All which is as good as acknowledg'd by our *Discourser*; and I shou'd be glad if he wou'd condescend to shew us a better

ter way than was offer'd above, whereby the Love of GOD and the Interests of another Life may be constantly our ruling and predominant Passion. p. 55.

152. In the mean time, and to be as *Intelligible* as I can, I desire only that our Love to GOD may be compar'd with, and examin'd by that Love which we have had to any of His Creatures, upon whom we have sometimes set our hearts, or even the Love we at present bear, to those whom we think we Love with intire subordination to the Love of GOD. For if we are more deeply and more lastingly affected with the Gain or Loss of a Friend, or any Temporal Advantage or Affliction whatever, than we are with our offences against GOD or the hopes of Pardon; or with the loss, or the obtaining of His Favour; I know not by what sort of Reasoning we can conclude that we Love Him above all things. There's a difficulty 'tis true, in setting our Affections on things above and not on things on the Earth, in being dead to Sense and placing all our Felicity in a Spiritual and Invisible Object. But yet it may be done, and that without a *lively Remorse* for Pleasures that all of us reckon unallowable. What turn may be given to the streams of some Men Affections, or what disgust such a Remorse may give p. 27.

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give them to *all sensible Pleasures* I know not, they who have felt it are best able to account for it. But this I can say, That consulting our own experience we shall find, that we never plac'd our hearts very much on any the most allowable Object this World affords, but that in a little time it gave us sufficient Reason as heartily to dispise it. Whether from a Remorse for our Guilt in having Lov'd *any* Creature, or from a full demonstration of our Folly in not *proportioning our desires to the worth of the thing*; I leave to our Discourfers to determine.

153. In sum, since the Persons we Love are ever in our Thoughts, since we endeavour to recommend our selves to them by resembling their Manners, and take great satisfaction in their Conversation, we need but try our Love to GOD in these three Instances. For 'tis certain we can have no real Affection whatever we may pretend, for those whom we seldom think of, or think of very coldly; whom we take no care to please; and whose ways are not agreeable to us; whose company is irksome, and whom we wou'd entertain as seldom and as late as is possible. If then we Love GOD He will be ever in our Thoughts with Pleasure, we shall Imitate all His Imitable

ble Perfections ; His Worship and our Addresses to Him whether in our Closets or in the Place where His Honour dwelleth, will be the pleasantest not the heaviest part of our Lives ; we shall be sorry not glad to defer this Conversation upon any pretence of Company or Business. But to be sure, we shall have longing, if not impatient desires after the perfect Enjoyment of GOD in Glory. For Human Nature is so form'd, that it incessantly pants after that which it takes to be its true Good. And if we do not thus pant after GOD, desiring to be dissolved and to be with Christ, it is, it can be ultimately, for no other Reason but want of Love to Him. Other things please us better, so that we desire to enjoy them as long as we can, and to go to GOD only when of necessity we must. Whereas a true Love to GOD tho' it keeps us content to live so long as He thinks fit, yet it gives us such an indifference to this World, that we are but *barely content* ; and this in pure Obedience to GOD's Will, not because of any Relish of this Present Life, or Fondness for it. And even whilst it is His Pleasure to have us tarry in this state of Absence and Infelicity, our Thoughts will fix on the Object of our Love. We shall contemplate GOD with all that veneration

and desire that is due (or rather the *due* that we are able to pay) to His Excellences; shall find no good that can come in competition with him, indeed no good besides Him. And whilst we thus constantly think of GOD, 'tis hardly possible to Disobey Him. We may fail in our Duty sometimes, thro' mere Ignorance, mistake or inadvertency, but we can never wilfully Transgress, any more than Human Nature can refuse Good and chuse Evil, purely as such.

154. For the irregularity of our Wills proceeds from the error of our Understandings, from calling Good Evil, and Evil Good. How we come to do thus is too large an enquiry for this Letter, which has already grown too much upon my hands. But the best way to avoid it, is to keep our true Good continually in view. We may live a Contemplative Life without being Recluse, and as this will be very much for the good of Society, so I know not any thing else can render Society in its present degenerate condition, tolerable to an honest Mind. The Christians of our days being no better than *Jeremiah's* Co-temporary *Jews*,
 Jer. 9. 2. That *assembly of Treacherous Men*, who made the Prophet sigh after a *Lodging place in the Wilderness*. Esteeming it better to live in Desarts among Wild Beasts,
 open

open and declar'd Enemies, than in Cities among pretended and deceitful Friends, who will do nothing but *for a Reward*, as another Prophet complains, *Mic. 7. 3.* or out of some sinister and base design; unless it be *Evil*, and this they do *with both hands earnestly*. The best of them being as a Brier, and the most upright sharper than a Thorn-hedge, so that an Innocent and Sincere Person can't converse among them, without hazard of having his Liberty or Integrity torn from him. The Love of GOD indeed, and this only can reconcile him to this burden, which becomes tolerable when endur'd for GOD's sake, and in submission to His Providence.

155. Every one knows, That the Mind will not be kept from Contemplating what it Loves, in the midst of crouds and business. Hence come those frequent absences, so observable in Conversation; for whilst the Body is confin'd to the present Company, the Mind is flown to that which it delights in. If GOD then be the Object of our desires, we shall relieve our selves in the common uneasinesses of Life, by Contemplating His Beauty. For certainly there cannot be a higher Pleasure, than to think that we Love and are Belov'd by the most Amiable and Best Being. Whom

the more we Contemplate the more we shall desire, and the more we desire the more we shall enjoy. This desire having the Pre-eminence of all other desires, as in every other thing so particularly in this, that it can't be disappointed; no one who brings a sincere heart, being ever rejected by this Divine Lover. Whose Eyes pierce the Soul, and as He can't be deceiv'd by an Imposture, so He never mistakes or neglects the Faithful Affection; which too seldom finds ways to make it self understood among Mortals, even by those who pretend to be the most discerning, but who give themselves up to the Flatteries of Deceivers, whilst they treat the Plain and Honest Person with the utmost outrage.

156. It has been said already, That these and all other Duties to GOD, arise from the Infinite Perfection and Supereminency of His Nature, and the Imperfection and Dependance of our own; and from the Relation we bear to Him thro' Christ our Head. But because few People are Reasonable enough to deduce their Duty from its Principles, or will give themselves, what they think, the trouble of doing it, tho' it is in truth one of the noblest and most entertaining Pleasures; and because GOD in great condescension to Human Infir-

ty, has given us the Precepts and Example of His SON, for our more particular direction; and further, because all our Performances receive their value from that Principle of entire Obedience from whence they must proceed, and which is better in GOD's account than the most pompous Sacrifices and Services of our own Invention; I shall therefore consider all the rest as Acts of Obedience.

157. Every one can tell what it is to Obey, and how they themselves desire to be Obey'd, nor will they endure to have their own Commands disputed, how forward soever they are to dispute the Commands of their Rulers. And were it not that all sorts of Disobedience proceed from the same Principle of Impiety and Pride, one wou'd be less surpriz'd to find Men examine and contradict the Commands of Men like themselves in all Respects, except in that Sacred Character stamp'd upon them by GOD, whose Authority they bear, and which is a much greater distinction, and ought to receive a greater deference than most of us imagine; yet this notwithstanding, they are not Infallible, nor always so Just and Good as they ought to be: But what pretence can we have to dispute the Commands of GOD
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Himself? for setting aside His Absolute Sovereignty, His Wisdom and Goodness must render them infinitely desirable! He is indeed pleas'd to treat us like what He has made us, Rational Creatures, and allows us to examine the Goodness and Equity of His Precepts. Shall we then abuse His Condescension? and instead of inquiring into Divine Truths with a becoming Modesty, Humility, and Thankfulness, treat GOD with that unsufferable Insolence which is too much practis'd every where, from which even Good-breeding, the only Religion that some People have, shou'd methinks restrain them, if Reason and Religion do not weigh with them. For if they have no Sense of the distance between their Maker and themselves, they shou'd at least, in good Manners to His Servants, keep their Impieties and Sins as private as they can. For whose heart can chuse but burn within them, who can refrain from *answering the Fool according to his Folly*, when they see the King of Glory affronted by every Vile Worm, who breaths only by His sufferance?

158. As for the better sort of us, one wou'd think by our way of serving GOD, that we fanſie He's oblig'd to us for our Homage; that our keeping some of His Laws, gives us a privilege to break

break others; and that He ought to humour us in all our desires. And to speak a plain truth, one hardly finds that Person who will be content with such an Obedience from his Servant, as he himself offers to the Great Lord of Heaven and Earth!

159. To *Worship* and *Adore* the Divine Majesty, to *Pray* to GOD and to *give Him Thanks*, both as a Homage to His Perfections, and as a means to supply our own Wants, and also to express our Gratitude and Sense of His Bounties, is a Natural Duty. As it is also to pay *Honour* and *Veneration* to every thing that has a Relation to the Worship of GOD, as the Time, the Place, the Persons who Officiate, the Holy Rites that are perform'd; and in a word, to all that is Dedicated to His Service, which is for this Reason Sacred, and not to be touch'd by Prophane and Common Hands: But the circumstances relating to His Worship, must be learnt from Divine Revelation. And since he expects that we pay Him Publick Homage, in a Congregation Assembled according to His directions, we can't excuse our selves by paying it at Home, or in Company of our own chusing. His Grace is His own Free Gift, and is not to be expected but in such methods and by such conveyances as He Himself has

See Letter
concern-
ing Church
Communi-
on, p. 9,
&c.

has Ordain'd. Surely then one would think they had never Read the Scriptures, who presume to teach the Ladies of their Acquaintance, that there is nothing in the Gospel Ordinances, and the Solemn Assemblies of Christians for Religious Worship, but what any Body, even *Women*, may perform, and that the necessity of *Communicating at the Lord's Table* by the Ministry of a *Priest*, is only deriv'd from the power of *Priest-craft*, and is not according to *Gospel Simplicity*. *St. Paul* for certain was of another Mind, or else he wou'd not have bestow'd so many directions concerning this Sacred Ordinance; and so were the First Ages of the Church, for they look'd upon this Sacrament as the highest Act of Religious Worship, and cannot be thought to have degenerated so early.

Chap. 1.
27.

160. *Devotion* is properly the giving up our selves entirely to the service of another: And *pure Religion and undefiled before GOD*, is (as *St. James* tells us) to *visit the Fatherless and Widows in their Affliction*, and to keep our selves unspotted from the World. To Pray to GOD is to put our selves more immediately and expressly into the Divine Presence, in order to offer up our Addresses to Him. And as it is a Mockery and Prophana-tion, and such as no Civil Person wou'd be

be guilty of towards an Earthly Superior, to repeat so many devout Words without an awful Sense of the Divine Majesty, and without those Affections our Words express: So be our Attention and Affection what they may, 'tis in vain to Pray unless we endeavour to Imitate the Holiness we Adore, to Practise those Vertues we ask, and to Use the Grace we Implore. As for such as neglect the Devotion and Religion above express'd, let them say ever so many Prayers, hear ever so many Sermons, profess ever so much Zeal either for Church or Conventicle, they are not Devout or Religious Persons: For the one is to be done, and the other is not to be left undone. *To be Holy as GOD is Holy* is the main Business, but unless we pretend to be Wiser than GOD, we must allow Him to prescribe the Means in order to this End. *Jordan* had in it self no more Vertue to Cure a Leprosy than *Abana* and *Pharpar*, till GOD had said to *Naaman*, *Go wash in Jordan and be clean*. But after this Command, the Waters of *Jordan* were so absolutely necessary, that he cou'd not be cleans'd without them.

161. Our Blessed Saviour has set us the brightest pattern of every Vertue, and the best thing we can do is to form
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Colof. 1.
14, 20.

Art. 28.

Art. 25.

our selves upon this most Perfect Example; but this is not the *only* thing to be remembred at His Table. He did that for us which no mere Man, no nor the Whole Creation, cou'd possibly perform, He satisfy'd Divine Justice for the Sins of the Whole World, and *having made Peace thro' the Blood of His Cross*, as the Scripture speaks, *reconcil'd all things unto the Father*; so that we have *Redemption thro' His Blood, even the Forgiveness of Sins*. And the Lord's Supper is a Sacrament of *our Redemption by Christ's Death*: It is not only a badge or token of our Profession, but rather a certain sure Witness and effectual Sign of Grace and GOD's Good-will towards us, by the which He doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our Faith in Him: As the Church teaches in her Articles, which our Divine having subscrib'd, this must needs be his sense, for we may not suspect him of Prevarication. He says indeed very truly, That our *Preparation for the Lord's Table*, shou'd not be accompanied with *Anxieties*. For as one can't well understand why People will take the Liberty to do that presently after the Holy Sacrament, which they wou'd not allow themselves two or three days before; so neither why they make that a task and toil, a sort of Penance, which

which is in it self a most delightful Performance, a Feast of Joy and Gladness. Or what can be the meaning of those melancholy Looks and Airs that are then put on, unless it be that believing it necessary to dismiss our Sins at the Lord's Table, we are sad and out of humour till we think we may meet again.

162. For the *Fear* of GOD does not consist in an uncomfortable Dread of Him who is the Best, the most Lovely and most Desirable Being, but in a Reverential Awe of His Majesty and care that we may not Offend Him. To *Honour* GOD, is to give Him the Preference that is due to His Excellency. But we do nothing like it, if we run the risque of His Displeasure upon any Consideration, any Gain or Loss, any Pleasure or Pain whatever; or if we can be much uneasy when we are not under it, be our Lot what it may in other respects. I therefore reproach my self with want of Veneration for GOD, when I find I am concern'd for any thing besides His Favour. For if He Smiles, it matters not who Frowns, nor how the World goes if we have Peace with Him. As on the other hand, we are truly Miserable, how Prosperous soever our Neighbours may reckon us, or we may call our selves

selves, unless G O D approves both the design, whose success we are so much pleas'd with, and our method of obtaining it.

Job 13. 7.

163. In truth, the *speaking*, or doing *Wickedly for GOD*, or our selves, for our selves are always at the bottom of it, is such a complicated Wickedness, that I know not to what Sin I shou'd refer it. Our Duties to G O D more immediately, are those several acts of Acknowledgment, Worship, or Homage that we owe to each of His Divine Attributes; the doing Wickedly for G O D is a Sin that affronts them all, and in the most provoking manner, for it Affronts GOD under pretence of Honouring Him. Faith acknowledges G O D's Being and Veracity; but this is a Practical Atheism and Disbelief of Providence, whose conduct it does not like, and therefore will follow its own. Obedience confesses G O D's Sovereignty and Authority; whereas this is a Rebellion and direct Disobedience to many plain Commands. Love declares GOD's Goodness; this expects Felicity some where else. Hope relies upon His Bounty and Faithfulness, and Trust refers it self to His Wisdom and Power; but this questions His Wisdom, flights His Power, and has no regard to any thing but its own sufficiency.

ciency. We proclaim GOD's Holiness by the Purity of our Manners, and His Justice, by Fearing to offend Him; this, prophanes the one and dares the other; and will take no warning by those severe Examples of GOD's Chastisements of such Presumptuous Sinners, recorded in Holy Writ. We own GOD's Mercy when we Repent, whereas this knows no Repentance, but *wipes its Mouth and says it has done no Wickedness*; nay, even accounts its very Sins, hallow'd by its pretended good design, as Meritorious Actions. We pay Homage to GOD's Omnipresence by every Act of Religious Worship, and by flying to Him in our Distress; But this, supposes Him not to be a GOD at hand; and therefore it *Sacrifices to its own Net, and burns Incense to its own Drag*. By all those Acts of Duty, by that Superlative Honour and Veneration we pay to GOD, and by Resigning our selves to His Conduct, we Adore His Infinite Perfections, Glorify them in the World, and express our Aweful Sense of His Omniscience, Omnipotence, Eternity, and other Attributes, without which He cou'd not Observe and Reward our Duty: Whereas this instead of seeking GOD's Glory as it pretends, does only seek to carve out to it self a present Reward; tho' hereby it offers

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GOD the greatest dishonour among Men, that Creatures can shew to their Creator, laying one of the most dangerous Stumbling-blocks in the way to Heaven. For how can Mankind distinguish in this Case between the Servants of the Only Lord GOD, and the Slaves of the *God of this World*, who can do no more than depend upon their own Cunning and Strength, and stick at no measures to accomplish their Designs? We ought therefore to have the same abhorrence of this detestable Sin that *St. Paul* had; and when we are tempted by the plausible harangues and pretences of Crafty and Designing Men, let us set before our Eyes the Sentence that Apostle pronounces upon such as
 Rom. 3. 8. *do Evil that Good may come, (viz.) That their Damnation is Just.*

164. *Hope and Trust* in GOD are of so near Affinity, that they are put promiscuously one for the other in Holy Scripture; for they cannot in reality be separated, Hope regarding the End we aim at, and Trust the way to this End. For a Christian Hope is the firm expectation of that future Good which Christ has promis'd in His Gospel. And Trust is a dependance upon the Divine Conduct, a referring our selves intirely to GOD's Method and Way of obtaining all that we can hope or desire.

Trust

Trust does not otherwise differ from Obedience, than in that sweet Repose it gives to every Obedient Mind. And *Submission* and *Resignation* are nothing else but the highest Acts of Obedience and Trust, the giving up our Understandings and Wills intirely to GOD's Precepts and Providence, acquiescing in all His Orders with a firm perswasion that they are best.

165. The glorious Promises of the Gospel, excite our Natural passion of (a) Hope, and this Hope secures our (a) Rom. Duty, keeping us firm and steady in the 15. 4. way to obtain (b) them. It makes us (b) Heb. not asham'd to Confess the Faith of Christ 6. 19. whatever we may suffer by this Confession (c). And thus it is that we are (c) Rom. Sav'd by Hope (d), that is, we are kept 5. 5. from falling off from our Duty, and are (d) Rom. carry'd thro' all present Difficulties in 8. 24, 25. expectation of a future Recompence. 3. Rom. 15. 4, 13. Therefore *Patience* is commonly joyn'd 26. with *Hope*: And be our present pressures what they may, we are fill'd with all Joy and Peace in believing (e), and in depen- (e) Rom. ding on the GOD of Hope. But then it 14. 13. is to be remembred, That whatever it is we Hope in, we don't Hope in GOD, if we expect Salvation, of any sort, by any other Ways and Means than what GOD has appointed. It is not Despair

1 S. John
3. 3.

to conclude that there is no Mercy for Impenitent Sinners, it is a just and sound Judgment: The Sin against Hope, is neglecting *to Purify our selves as GOD is Pure*. Nor is there any great difference whether this neglect proceeds from a groundless Despair of GOD's Mercy, when His Covenant and Promises encourage us to depend upon it; or as groundless a presuming beyond what He has Promis'd and Covenanted; since both center in the same point, and have the same fatal Conclusion.

166. We can never obtain the End that Hope has in view, without depending on the Conduct of our Guide, nor is there the least Reason to doubt that He who Invites and Leads us on, will be wanting in affording us all necessary Assistance and Refreshments in the Way. But we do not Trust GOD if we expect success by any method but Obedience; or if we do not firmly adhere to His Commands, even when there is no human prospect, no probability of obtaining our Innocent, or most Laudable Designs by such a method. And whatever we may talk of Resignation, we do nothing like it, if we are solicitous any further than for the doing of our Duty which is our part, and do not leave the Event which is GOD's, entirely to Him, with

with perfect satisfaction in His Wisdom in discerning, and Goodness in dispensing what is Best for us; being not only pleas'd with all His Dispensations, but even chearful under them.

167. But now, if the noble Theory and Practise of these Duties as recorded in Holy Writ, be compar'd with our Modern Attainments, one shall be apt to conclude, That either we do not Serve the same GOD whom the Primitive Christians Trusted in; or else that He has given us New Measures of Dependance. For now a-days we put more Confidence in our own Craft and the Assistance of our Rich and Great Patron who seldom if ever answers our most Reasonable and Just Expectations; we Relie more upon an Arm of Flesh, upon Worldly, not to say Wicked, Arts and Contrivances, than on the Promises and Protection of the Almighty, who neither does nor can Disappoint those who put their Trust in Him. Tho' if GOD does not Govern the World, it is not worth while to stay in it; and if He does govern it, every Event, however unlikely, shall tend to the good of His Faithful Servants. And I dare appeal to the Experience of Mankind, That the things we have been most fond of, and as we may think innocently so, have

done us the greatest Mischief. Whereas the being disappointed has been much to our Advantage, not only with regard to our future Happiness, but even after the first struggle, to our present Pleasure and Satisfaction.

168. Well then, if I *Seek the Kingdom of GOD and His Righteousness*, and don't carelessly squander the Provision His Providence has made for me, or which my own Industry may obtain, in a Just, an Honourable, and Moderate way, what occasion for Complaints, *Solicitude* and Fears, or any the least uneasiness about Worldly matters? those being evident signs of distrust, let us call them by what names we please. But tho' there were no Sin in it, there can't be a more Ridiculous Folly than this Solicitude; a Folly our Lord has most Divinely expos'd in His Sermon on the Mount. For what more absurd than to be full of Thought and Concern about Trifles? Things, that GOD the best Judge, makes so little account of, that He bestows them indifferently on the Good and on the Evil. Things we can enjoy but a very short while, and which tho' possess'd ever so long wou'd not satisfy. Things which the Providence of GOD, furnishes without our Care, and which all our Care cannot secure! To see a Man
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Tormenting himself and his Neighbours to no better purpose than to make a Fortune, in which he's either defeated by some body more Cunning than himself, when 'tis just in reach; or if he obtains it, either Death takes him off in the height of his Delight, and then all his Thoughts perish, or he only lives to taste the bitter draught of a declining Fortune. And be it how it may, the fine Scene continues but Thirty or Forty Years at most, tho' generally not half so long. Thus we see the utmost that's to be got by Solitude, but who considers what's to be lost? Our Reasonable Hopes of a Kingdom that can't be shaken! an Eternal Crown of Glory! Pleasures that never cease, and that always satisfy! It being certain, That the Mind is too narrow to attend two things at once to any great purpose, even tho' there be no contrariety in them, so that if we are full of this World and make it our Business, there's little or no place for the Concerns of the next.

169. *Pride* is a Sin that is generally complain'd of, and it may be not without cause; tho' I can't say, That the true Reason of the Complaint is always told; or that the assigned Reason of the Accusation is always a just one. There are so many in the World who will do

any mean thing to get into Favour and Office, or to put a little Money in their Purse, that he's usually counted Proud whose Soul is not as Base as their's. He who will not fall into all the opinions and measures of those who are Richer and Greater, not Better, than himself, over-values his own Judgment in their account. Another is Proud, because he knows the worth of Time too well to throw it away upon every Impertinence. To have but few Wants when most People have so many; to bear those one has without complaint; is not Prudence, Temperance, and Fortitude, but unsufferable Pride in their esteem. To refuse an Obligation from an Unworthy Person, and they are not the least unworthy who wou'd barter their Favours for your Liberty and Vertue, is an Insolence not to be endur'd. And in a word, to remember the dignity of a Member of Christ when others forget it, and to attempt to be Wiser and Better than your Neighbours, is that sort of assuming which they least forgive. But whilst we are correcting these and other sorts of Pride, more truly so call'd, which offend us in our Fellow-Creatures, who is there that regards the daily Pride and Insolence that all of us shew to our Creator?

170. I do not deny but that we may behave our selves Proudly, and hereby Unjustly, towards our Neighbours; but then it must be granted, That this Pride reflects upon GOD Himself, and is a contempt of our Creator. So the Wise King informs us when he says, *He that mocketh the Poor, Reproacheth his Maker*; and the Apostle assures us, *That he who Despiseth, Despiseth not Man but GOD.* Humility according to St. Paul's account of it, consists in *not thinking of our selves more highly than we ought to think*, and consequently in Actions fuitable to these Sober Thoughts; in not assuming to our selves any Honour or Advantage that is not our due, nor denying to others what they have a right to. Now all we *Have* and all we *Are* is so intirely from GOD and does so absolutely depend on Him, that every sort and every degree of Arrogating to our selves any manner of way, with regard to Him, is in prejudice of His Right; and to do thus, or to use any of His Gifts contrary to His Will and Service, is Pride; it is an unjust assuming of what does not belong to us. But it is not so with respect to any of our Neighbours, for there are certain Rights belonging to Mankind in general, and others that are justly appropriated to particular Persons, and he

he who pretends no farther than he has a just claim, can't fairly be accus'd of Pride.

171. There's a Reverence due to Human Nature, because of GOD's Image, which all of us in some sense bear. We are Brethren, not only by Nature, but after a more excellent manner, in Christ our Elder Brother; nay we are yet more nearly Related, being Members of the same Body. And therefore owe Respect and Civil Usage, and all the offices of Humanity and Christian Charity to each other, to the meanest and most despicable; from which, even the Sins of the Wicked can't wholly exclude them, tho' Sin is of all other things the most dishonourable and degrading. There is also a more Peculiar *Outward* Respect and Honour due to *some*, according to the Laws and Customs of the Place we Live in; and an *Inward* Esteem to *others*, in proportion to their Real Worth. Nor is he less guilty of Pride and Folly, who refuses to pay his Neighbours that honour and value which is due to their Wisdom and Vertue, than is he who denies them that Precedence which belongs to their Birth and Quality; nay, his Pride is more unreasonable, and his Folly more ridiculous, by how much he is Injurious to a greater Excellency. He who
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has not so much Money as his Neighbours, is foolishly Proud if he vies with them in Expences and way of Living: But he is not less Ridiculous, who fancies he has better Sense than another, because he has more Money; or that they ought to submit to his Judgment, because he ought to go before them; or that he knows more than another only because he is Older; or lastly, and which is as reasonable a Conclusion as any of the rest, That a Man is Wiser than a Woman merely because he is a Man! For he who has no more Understanding than to argue at this rate, must not take it amiss if he is Esteemed accordingly, it being very hard to keep ones self from despising those who are so weak as to discover such ridiculous Pretensions.

172. As for that *Humility* which consists in Resignation and the giving up our selves to another's disposal, this is, this can be due to none but GOD. It is Arrogance in any Mortal to assume such a Power over another, any further than as he can shew by Divine Commission, that GOD has delegated a part of His own Authority to him. The Pride then is not in them who refuse to pay, but in those who pretend to receive such a Subjection.

All of you be 1 S. Pet.
Subject 5. 5.

Subject one to another and be cloath'd with Humility, is indeed a Divine Precept; but this can't oblige me to Subject my self to any Private Person whoever, since this Precept does as much require him to pay Subjection, as it gives him a right to claim it. But, as appears by the Context, the Subjection and Deference requir'd by that Text, is to be paid to those whom GOD has set over us in His Church. Who as they are not to take upon them that weighty Office for the sake of *Filthy Lucre*, or of *Dominion*; nor are to exercise it in a Lordly manner, but in Imitation of the great Shepherd who gave Himself for His Sheep, and in prospect of that *Crown* of Glory that fadeth not away: So the *Younger*, or Inferior Ministers, are to submit themselves to the *Elder*, that is, to the Bishops and Governors; and the People to be *Subject* to their Lawful Pastors, whatever their own gifts and graces may be. For this being the Divine Institution, whoever takes upon him to transgress it, under pretence of greater Purity, greater Edification, or his own wondrous Abilities, will find that *G O D Resisteth* such *Proud* assuming; and such disorderly walking; whereas *He giveth Grace to the Humble*, to those who dutifully maintain the Station wherein *G O D* has plac'd

plac'd them, and carefully preserve the Order that He Himself has Establish'd.

173. He then is the Proud Person, who forgetting the Giver of all Good things, looks on himself as Proprietor of that which he has only receiv'd, and for which he must strictly account; or who Uses and Boasts of it, as if it were absolutely his own. He who thinks he has Gifts which he has not; who fancies himself to be *Something* when indeed *he is Nothing*; or who rates what he possesses above its real Worth, valuing himself upon that which is not truly Valuable; who upon *this* account exalts himself above, or upon *any* account dispiseth his Neighbour. He who foolishly imagines himself too Great or too Good to perform any Office of Humanity or Charity, to any the Meanest of his Brethren; if any can be Mean who are the Work of GOD's Hands, the Price of Christ's Blood, and *Heirs of the Glorious Inheritance of the Saints in Light*: Such an one *deceiveth himself, he is Proud and knoweth nothing*, he knows not that his Neighbours partake in the most valuable Privileges, and that the things whereby he is distinguish'd are very Inconsiderable.

1 Cor. 4.

7.

Gal. 6. 3.

Prov. 16.

Eccl. 8. 13.

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174. All sorts of *Pride* are an Abomination to the Lord, and he who exalteth himself.

Luke 14.
11.

† Dan. 5.
18, &c.

Isai. 2. 11,
&c.

Psal. 75. 5,
&c.

Jer. 50. 29.
Ezek. 28.

* Prov.

22. 4.

|| James 4.
10.

1 Peter 5.
6.

† Isai. 57.
15.

& 66. 2.

himself in any other manner than by pursuing the Perfection of his Nature, *shall surely be abased*; yet that which we least observe, tho' we are most frequently admonish'd in Holy Writ to avoid it, and that which GOD does in an especial manner, set Himself against, is, *The lifting up our selves against the Lord of Heaven †, the being Proud against the Holy One of Israel.* For the Holy Scripture joyns Humility with the *Fear of GOD **, Commands us to *Humble our selves in His Sight, and under His mighty Hand ||.* And GOD is pleas'd to tell us, *That He dwells with the Humble and Contrite Heart †, those who tremble at His Word, and pay Him an Awful and Constant Obedience.*

175. But among all the Complaints against Pride, when do we hear any one blam'd for being Proud against GOD, or for treating the Divine Authority contemptuously, unless when we our selves have a share in it, and by this means partake in the affront? otherwise we leave the Divine Majesty to assert its own Rights, whilst we take care of ours! And tho' we stand so much upon our own Punctilio's, and are ready to take fire upon the least seeming neglect, which we hardly if ever forgive; yet we make nothing of behaving our selves with

with the most Audacious Arrogance towards our Great and Sovereign Lord.

176. By violating His Laws; by Profaning His Awful Name; by a contempt, or at best a neglect, of His Service; by careless and irreverent Addresses; by Murmuring at His Providence and finding fault with His Ways, or which is the same thing, by refining on them; by not suffering Him, I mean, so far as we can hinder, to Govern the World that He has made, and to bring about His Glorious Designs by His own most Upright Methods; but pretending to assist His Providence by our little and indirect Arts, and our Unrighteous Actions; by *doing Evil that Good may come*, which is the vilest Pride, and Contempt of GOD, for it is a supposing ourselves Wiser than Him, and that *He stands in need of the Sinful Man*; By assuming the Divine Prerogative whilst we take upon us to humble our Neighbours; it being as much GOD's Peculiar, and that which He has reserved in His own Hand, to bring down the Proud as to take Vengeance upon the Injurious. For we are as improper Judges of our Neighbours Pride, as of what's a just Recompence for our own Wrongs. Daily experience shewing, That they are the Proudest People who take upon them

to correct their Neighbour's Haughtiness; and that we never go about to humble the suppos'd or real Pride of another, but that we manifestly declare a greater Pride and Insolence of our own.

177. It were endless to trace all the ways of the Children of Pride, I shall mention but two more, one of which strikes at G O D's Authority, the other at His very Being. The first is that Seditious and Schismatical Spirit, deriv'd from the Devil the first pattern of Pride, which prompts us to *despise Dominions, and to speak evil of Dignities*; to behave our selves Irreverently, and as often as we can with Impunity, disobediently to our Lawful Governors in Church and State. For Rebellion and Disobedience, besides the hurt they do to Society, the Injustice, Confusion, and Irreparable Injuries that attend them; are highly aggravated, and become Sins of the deepest die, by that open Contempt of G O D from whence they spring, and which they loudly proclaim, whatever may be the pretence, even tho' it be that which is the furthest in the World from allowing such Practices, Religion.

Luke 10.
16.

178. Our Lord has told us, That whoever *Despiseth* His Ministers *Despiseth* Him,

Him, and *G O D* who sent Him. And since it is by *G O D*'s appointment that *Kings Reign*, and that *Princes* have Authority to *Decree Justice*; and that *there is no Lawful Power but of G O D*; he who will not submit himself for the Lord's sake, to every Ordinance of Man, that is, to every Lawfully Constituted Form of Government, (for I hope no body will say, That Banditti and Pyrates, tho' they have a Constitution and Laws among themselves, Act by *G O D*'s Authority) but who takes upon him upon any pretence whatsoever, to resist the Supreme Power, such an one *Resisteth the Ordinance of G O D*, is a Rebel against the Divine Majesty, and must expect the terrible Punishment due to such Resistance.

179. A Doctrine as plainly deliver'd in Holy Scripture, as, *Thou shalt not Kill, Thou shalt not Steal*, and we may as well distinguish away Murder and Theft, and seek for plausible colours to justify or excuse our making bold with the Properties and Lives of our Neighbours, as suppose that any Expositions or Facts of ours, can null the Divine Establishments, or make any Mutations in the Laws of *G O D*, by which Christians are under the strictest Obligation to render Active Obedience to Just Authority,

Letter
concern-
ing
Church
Communi-
on. p. 17.

Ibid. p.
16, 17.

in all Instances that are not contradictory to G O D's Commands, and to Submit quietly to the Penalty where they cannot actually Obey. There are so many plain Precepts to this purpose that it is unnecessary to collect them, and to put the Doctrine past doubt, they have been exemplify'd in the most lively manner by the Primitive and Best Christians, whatever some Modern Teachers may say, who take upon them to the Scandal of the Age, to call the Doctrine of the Cross *pernicious*, with as good Divinity as they do with Law and Sense call *Non-Resistance a Traiterous Doctrine here in England*. And as it can't be deny'd that the Church teaches this Doctrine in her *Homilies*, according as she has receiv'd it from the Word of G O D, and therefore they might have spared their Proofs; so, whatever else she may be asham'd of, she has no reason to be asham'd of her Doctrines.

180. Your Ladiship it's like will wonder why I say so much in a matter wherein Women are suppos'd to be unconcern'd. My Reason is because the *Divines* who writ *Letters*, and *Explain Principles to Ladies*, insist upon this among the rest. And because a little Practice of the World will convince us, That Ladies are as grand Politicians, and

and every whit as Intriguing as any Patriot of the Good-old-cause. Perhaps because the gentleness of their Temper makes them fitter to insinuate and gain Profelytes; or that being less suspected they may be apter to get and to convey Intelligence, and are therefore made the Tools of Crafty and Designing Demagogues. This made me think it not improper to take notice of the plain and genuine Sense of Christianity in this matter, That if Ladies will needs be Politicians they may not build upon a Rotten and Unchristian Foundation. A Foundation destructive of all Government in general, leaving no sort settled and quiet any longer than till a Party can be form'd strong enough to overthrow it. How busie looks and grand concern about that Bill and t'other promotion, how whispers and cabals, eternal disputes and restless sollicitations, with all the equipage of Modern Politicians, become the Ladies, I have not skill to determine. But if there be any thing Ridiculous in it, I had rather leave the Observation to the Men, as being both more proper for their Wit, and more agreeable to their Inclinations.

181. The other Contempt of GOD which I was to take notice of, is what

Ladies I hope are but little, if at all concern'd in, that is, those bold Discourses about the Nature and Attributes of GOD, wherein Men take upon them to deny not only what He has declar'd of Himself in His Word, but even what Natural Reason teaches; which plainly proves, That if there be a GOD, He must needs be Infinitely Wise and Good, Just and Holy; and that to deny Him to be Infinite in all Perfections, either Directly or by Consequence, is in some respects worse than to deny His Existence. In a word, Atheism, Impiety, and Immorality, Schism and Rebellion, have commonly one and the same Original; they come from Pride, which will not suffer us to submit our Understandings to GOD's Word, nor our Wills to His Authority.

182. But Pride is not the only Sin which we copy from the Enemy of Mankind, there's another for which he is not less remarkable that we too much imitate. *Thro' envy of the Devil Sin came into the World*, says a wise Observer; and we may add, That thro' the Envy of Mankind a great deal of Good is kept out of the World, if not very much Evil introduc'd. It is a Duty no doubt which we owe to GOD, to use our utmost endeavours that His Name may
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be Glorify'd, and that all possible Good may be done and receiv'd by Mankind; and in short, to promote the cause of Truth and Vertue. But who among us has any concern for either, except it be to serve our own Temporal Interest or Party, or out of some such petty aim? We are as affraid of imparting Truth, unless to gain an Admirer or Disciple, as if Truth were like Worldly Possessions, lost by being Communicated. Sloth and a base ignoble Spirit which is the natural effect of every indulg'd Sin, especially of Voluptuousness, won't suffer us to do any thing that's Excellent our selves, and Envy won't endure that it shou'd be done by another, lest this reproach our Negligence. Envy which is so Injurious to GOD, to our Neighbour and to our Selves, so black in its own Nature, that were we Saints in all other respects, this alone wou'd tranform us into Devils, so very detestable, that tho it is a Plague that most of us are dying with, yet none will own that they are Infected!

183. But not to judge others I judge thus for my self; Since a good Understanding, with a Noble because a Vertuous Ambition to improve it, together with an Honest and Sincere Disposition of Mind to do the greatest Good, are

Beautiful and Valuable Qualities ; since they are the Gift of GOD and Benefits to Mankind , for when GOD is pleas'd to send such an excellent Spirit into the World , He designs it as a Blessing to the Age it appears in ; if I do not find a Joy at Heart whenever I discern these Qualifications, and an earnest desire to do all the good Offices in my power to the Persons who possess them, whoever they be, I conclude I am infected with Envy, and that the Plague is begun. For in GOD's Name, what but Envy can hinder me from Admiring what is Beautiful, from Esteeming what is Valuable, and from giving all the Assistance I am able, with due Praise and Encouragement to what is Useful and Beneficent ?

184. If I find an honest *Emulation* to do as well as they do, this ought not to be check'd but encourag'd, because 'tis a spur both to their Vertue and my own. But then this Emulation must always be attended with a Value for, and Love to their Persons, and must render them all the Praise and Service they can any way pretend to. For *Detraction*, or the lessening our Neighbours Merit and Reputation, by concealing or misrepresenting his Honourable Actions, which is indeed a detracting from Vertue,

tue, and a robbing GOD of the Glory that is due to His Grace, is a necessary effect and certain sign of Envy. And since the Effect is observable every where, we may well conclude that the Cause how much soever it is conceal'd, is as Epidemical.

185. But if instead of shewing Gratitude to GOD, Good-will and Esteem to His Servants, and assisting them in their generous Designs, I do all that in me lies to frustrate the Divine Favour; If it is come to that pass that my Neighbours Vertue grows an Eye-sore and galls me at Heart; if from not assisting, I go on to lay traps to destroy it, or openly oppose it, as the progress of Sin, and of this particularly, is very easie and quick; If I first try to work them after my own fashion, and to make them my property; or if failing in this I contrive their fall, rejoice in it, am pleas'd to see Vertue lost for want of Encouragement, and with a Devilish Joy erect a glaring Trophy on its Ruins; If like those profess'd opposers of GOD and true Goodness, whom the Wise Jew speaks of, *I examine the Vertuous Person with despitefulness and torture, that I may know his Meekness and prove his Patience, because he is not for my turn, he was made to reprove my Thoughts, his Life*

is not like other Mens, his ways are of another, and better fashion, his Example upbraids me with my offending the Law, and objecteth to my Infamy my Transgressions; if this is my progress, it is to be fear'd that the Poison has seiz'd my Heart, and my Case is in a manner desperate.

186. For who shall admonish their Neighbour of so detestable a Sin as Envy? were any one honest and kind enough to undertake that very Friendly but very Thankless Office, since to suppose them guilty of it is to lash them with the severest Satyr; and since Envy is a Sin that lies lurking in the Heart; a Sin which we not only industriously conceal from others, but even from our selves? Because tho' it often appears in those who are fullest of their own sufficiency, and is an inseparable attendant on the Proudest Spirits, yet it proceeds from a Consciousness of our own Infirmities and Weakness. For how much soever the Envious Person may be above the Envied in outward appearance, yet his own Mind reproaches him with the real Superiority of those whom he Envies, making him sensible whether he will or no, that they are his Betters: Which is the true Reason of his Ill-will to them, whatever the pretence may be.

187. Not

187. Not but that it is possible that the displeasure we feel at the good our Neighbour receives, may proceed from Covetousness, as well as from Envy, or from better Reasons, as Justice, and that laudable Indignation that arises in every Generous Breast, when an unworthy Person goes away with the recompence that is due to Merit; and under these disguises we endeavour to conceal our Envy. But then if we pretend to this *Generous Indignation*, we must be sure to have it, not only upon our own disappointment, but rather, and chiefly, upon the ill usage of others, whose Merits we may be allow'd to value without being Partial. And whatever fault we find with Men's Partiality in bestowing their Favours, there can be none to be sure in GOD's distribution of His Graces. So that every degree of Indignation at those Gifts which are deriv'd from His Bounty only, and are not misapply'd, is no better than Envy, whose *Eye is Evil because GOD is Good*, disputing His Right to *do what He will with His own*, and Insolently taxing Him of Injustice.

188. For to pass over the Injury we do to our Neighbour himself by *Envy* Eccles. 4. and Opposing, instead of Promoting every *Right Work*, which Injury is at once a
Flagrant

Flagrant Injustice and the height of Uncharitableness: To say nothing of the damage the World sustains, which wou'd not be so bad as it is, were every one's Talent observed, and were they assisted in the Work for which GOD has fitted them; especially those of a Superior Genius, of Activity and Resolution, who are qualify'd for the highest Attainments; and are the only Persons that can give check to that torrent of Corruption that breaks in upon Mankind in all Ages; and who *will* exert themselves, if not in doing Good, in doing of Mischief, unless their Vertue be as great as their other Qualifications, enabling them to overcome, I had almost said their Just Resentments, at an Ungrateful World, for checking them in their generous and best Endeavours to serve it: Besides all this, our laying such a Temptation in our Brother's way, as its like we ourselves wou'd not Conquer, and depriving Mankind of the Benefit of his Vertues; we rob GOD of the Glory of His Graces by this malignant Envy; are Ingrateful to Him, *from whom every good and perfect Gift cometh*, and who bestows it for the Common Good; we Affront His Majesty by our Spite to those whom He Favours, and by Hating them for that very Reason for which we ought
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to Love them. And in fine, we express our Contempt of GOD by standing out against His Pleasure, and by opposing, or at least slighting His Commission, that is, those Abilities which He Bestows. and which give a Right to the Persons who possess them, to receive all that Assistance and Furtherance we are able to afford them, in the Execution of that Work, to which GOD, by giving them those Talents, has plainly design'd them.

189. If therefore we desire to clear our selves of this vile Sin, and to be indeed *Public-Spirited*, let us help every one forward in the best way; let us inquire after the Masterly Genius, rejoyce when we have found it, and instead of our former poor little Artifices to curb it, let us set it in the best Light, and no more endeavour to Form it by our Model, or work it to be our Tool. If we find it has too much Vertue and Honour to make so poor a Figure, and too much sense of GOD's Bounty to employ His Talents to no better purpose; let us not try to defeat its hopes by diverting it from its proper employment to some attempts it is not fit for, and so not like to succeed in. But if it is so discerning as to avoid this Trap, if it is above Temptation, and defended with a Vertue that cannot be

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corrupted, let us not for shame, miscall its Integrity Obstinacy. Let us not say they are Proud whose Spirits we cannot break; or Rash, whose Noble Ardour is not to be stopt; or full of themselves who only follow sincerely the best Light they can attain; or that they attempt things too high for them, who do no more than labour after that Perfection to which GOD at least Invites them, if He does not Command them to pursue it. Instead of thinking it Reason enough to oppose, or at best to afford no Assistance to a Laudable Undertaking, because our Advice was not ask'd, or it is not pursued by our Direction; by which it is evident, That the Good we may sometimes do, does not proceed from a Love to GOD and to True Goodness, but is perform'd merely to aggrandize our selves, and to set forth our own Abilities; Instead of racking our Invention to raise Objections, displaying our Wit in detracting from it, and using all our Artifices to lay Rubs in its way; Instead of bare Commendation and doing nothing further, tho' this as the World goes is a mighty matter, and what but few come up to; let us, even for our own sakes, that most powerful perswasive! henceforth heartily espouse and vigorously promote every good Work, since

since by this means we our selves will be sharers in the Benefit and Honour.

190. All Sin is Folly, but Envy is more particularly so, because it brings no pleasure but pain to him who harbors it. The Indifferent or Middling *Genii* may perhaps be taken off, they may leave the way of Honour thro' want of due Encouragement; and therefore GOD has graciously allow'd us Reputation, and little present Recompences, to spur us on in a Vertuous Course. But the poor Spirited Envious will find, to their great Mortification, That if a Genius is rightly turn'd, nothing Animates and Improves it so much, as that Ungenerous and Unchristian Enmity it meets with, as has been observ'd in all Ages. This makes it exert it self and find it's own strength, this is a Theater to it's Prudence, and exercises it's Fortitude. And by doing the best things constantly and vigorously, notwithstanding all the opposition and evil return it meets with for doing so; by going forward with no other Encouragement but the Sense of Duty, and the Consciousness of doing Nobly, that Divine Pleasure! and without any other prospect but the Expectation of a Future Reward; it obtains the most Illustrious Character, and arrives at the highest degree of Heroick Vertue.

191. I

191. I know not whether I shou'd call *Rejoycing in GOD* a Duty, or the result of all other Duties; but I know 'tis unaccountable why we pursue so many foolish Pleasures, and neglect this Divine one. The good Christian only has Reason, and he always ought, to be Chearful. For, considering the Goodness of our Master, the Excellency of our Work, and the Grandeur of that Reward we have in view, our hearts must needs leap for Joy at all times, except when we reflect upon our Offences against so great a Goodness, and the danger of falling short of so Excellent a Reward.

Matth. 5.

4.

1 Thess. 5.

16.

192. It is true our Lord pronounces the *Mourners Blessed*; but it is also true, That we are commanded to *Rejoyce evermore*; so that Christian Mourning and Christian Rejoycing are not inconsistent, *Comfort* being the Beatitude promis'd to these Religious Mourners. The Mourning our Lord enjoyns being only oppos'd to Sensual and Worldly Mirth, to which Spiritual Joy is also so opposite, that the one always drives away the other. Therefore GOD in His Goodness tries to wean us from that Carnal and Vain Jollity, which cannot last, and does not profit, that we may be capable of those solid Joys, which the World can neither give

give nor take away. They injure both themselves and Religion who make all its Joys Future, for it has the *Promise* ^{1 Tim. 4. 8.} even of *this Life*, it enjoys its *hundred fold* ^{Mark 10. 30.} in Tranquility of Mind, and substantial Pleasure, in the midst of Persecutions. So that a true Christian *Rejoyces* ^{1 Thess. 5. 16.} evermore, in all Circumstances; he gives *thanks always for all things*; For all things that GOD sends without exception, for Poverty, Afflictions, Persecutions, and what Men account most Calamitous. And good Reason, since these are only Exercises of his Vertue, and opportunities to encrease his Reward; since they deprive him of no real Good, but bring him much, fortifying his Mind with such a Joy as no Man can take from him. ^{S. John 16. 22.}

193. Sin alone is the just cause of Sorrow, therefore the Lessons of Mourning are read only to the Jolly Sinner; To the *Rich Men*, to those who have *liv'd in Pleasure on the Earth and been Wanton*, who are exhorted to *Weep and Howl for the Miseries that shall come upon them*. But there's scarce a more unseemly sight than Dejected Looks and Melancholy Airs in a Christian; who sincerely endeavours to approve himself to GOD, tho' he does it with much Imperfection, being sensible of the Weakness

ness of Human Nature in general, and very particularly affected with his own. He who does not think that *the Lot is fallen unto him in a fair place, and that he has a goodly Heritage*, well worth his Joy, when he can say, *The Lord is my Portion*, even tho' it be his *only* Portion, is a most ungrateful Person, and unworthy of so great a Blessing. And I very much fear it is not, or will not long be his, since he knows so little how to value it. Let every Sincere Christian therefore, as much as Natural Temper will admit,

Phil. 4. 4. *Rejoyce in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoyce*; for this Holy Joy is at once the cure of foolish Mirth, and of as foolish Sorrow.

194. To close this Head; I neither Believe in GOD, nor Love, nor Honour, nor Fear, nor Worship, nor pay Him any sort of Duty which is indispensably due from a Creature to the Great Creator, unless I Obey Him. Nor is my Obedience what GOD requires unless I avoid every known, wilful Sin, do not allow my self in the habit of any Infirmary, nor indulge any noted Ignorance or Imperfection whatsoever. 'Tis very possible indeed to forget both GOD and my self, and to spend more Thought, Time, and Pains, in the Affairs and Pleasures of this Present Life, than in

in working out my Salvation; the Corruptions of the Age give us but too many Instances. But then this is in reality a Loving the World more than GOD, how loath soever we are to call it so; nor can I see how such a Course of Life is consistent with our Hopes of Heaven.

195. 'Tis also possible, after we have begun well, and made some progress, *to grow weary in well-doing*, otherwise we had not been caution'd against it. We may by a vain Presumption on our own Strength, by a forgetfulness of GOD, or an imprudent Security and Carelessness, expose our selves to Temptations that may prove too hard for us. Or tho' we are for the most part Watchful, the Devil and his Instruments may sometimes take advantage of our Temper, or Indisposition; of some unforeseen Accident, or great Surprize, or ill-grounded Principle; and place a Temptation in such circumstances as that it may overcome us.

196. Thus St. Peter whose Love to his Master was very Sincere, and who doubtless was resolv'd to Die with Him rather than Deny Him when he made this Profession, did notwithstanding fall very deplorably. Either because the fear of suffering prevail'd and his Cou-
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rage left him; tho' I do not think this was the Reason, since he was of an undaunted Temper: Or else the Confusion he was in to see his dearest Lord so vilely us'd, and his own Hopes defeated, made him no longer master of himself; Or rather, and which I take to be the true Reason, because GOD left him to himself to correct his Confidence, to make him sensible of his own Weakness, and to teach him an entire dependance on GOD the giver of all Grace. But had he instead of a speedy, a very particular, a bitter, and lasting Repentance, perswaded himself that there was no great hurt in what he had done, and (as some did afterwards) that it was enough to Believe with the Heart, and that one need not expose themselves to dangers by open Confession; that he only yielded to the Infirmary of Nature, and to a violent Temptation, so that he might refer himself to GOD's Mercy, without being much Concerned about the matter: Or had he on the other side gone over to the Unbelieving *Jews*, in order to stifle his Remorse; had he thrown off, as much as he cou'd, all Sense of His Saviour, and harden'd himself in Wick- edness, which is the true despera- tion; we shou'd never have had St. *Peter* in the Catalogue of Saints, but his

his latter End had been worse than his Beginning.

197. *Repentance* then is somewhat else besides a solemn Sorrow, returning at certain seasons set apart for the purpose. *Godly Sorrow* which arises from a full conviction and lively sense of the Goodness of GOD and the Evil of Sin, will indeed work a *Repentance not to be Repented of*; that is, it will produce a thorow ^{2 Cor. 7.} ^{10.} Change of Life, especially in that particular we have lately offended in, and a *Carefulness* and *Zeal* to approve our selves to GOD in all things for the future, by patient continuance in well-doing. But Sorrow, even Godly Sorrow, and Repentance are two distinct things, as is plain from St. Paul's Discourse, ^{2 Cor. 7.} For let our Sorrow be what it will, unless it brings forth *Fruits meet for Repentance*, even Universal Obedience, so far as we have Life and Power, tho' it may perhaps deceive us, it can ^{Matth. 3. 8.} never Reconcile us to our Maker.

S E C T. III.

198. **O**UR Neighbour, is every one to whom we can do any manner of Service, Enemies as well as Friends. And among all those Duties we owe to GOD, there are not any enforc'd with greater earnestness, than those which for His sake are due to our Neighbour. They are preferr'd sometimes to those immediate Acts of Worship that we owe to His own Majesty; so little Reason have we to fancy, That we do GOD Service by any rigorous usage of Mankind. And that we may never be at a loss in our Conduct towards them, we are commanded to do to others, as we, supposing we judge according to Right Reason, desire to be treated our selves. But how deprav'd soever our Judgments may be, the not doing to another that which if we were in his Case, and he in ours, we wou'd not desire he shou'd do to us, is a Rule of Equity of Perpetual Obligation; so that a *little* share of Sense, with *any* degree of Honesty may direct us in this matter. Nor can we ever be absolv'd from any Duty to our Neighbour that is in our power, because being due for
GOD's

GOD's sake, they must still be paid, whatever Returns may be made us by our Neighbour.

199. He who has never heard of Christianity, is oblig'd to Love his Neighbours because they partake of the same Nature. But Christians are under a further and higher Obligation, the Duty they owe to one another being founded on their mutual Relation to Christ their Head. And therefore, since every one is, or may be a Member of Christ, he is to be treated with Brotherly Affection. It is as unnatural for Christians to disobey those whom Christ has Substituted to *have the Rule over them*, Heb. 13. as it is for the Inferior Members of the 7. Body to Rebel against the Superior. As well may the Stomach refuse to distribute into every part of the Body the nourishment it receives, as Christians refuse to *do good unto all Men, especially to them who are of the Household of Faith:* Gal. 6 10. Which by the way, instructs us to give the Preference to the best Christian in all our Acts of Kindness and Beneficence. Injuriousness among the Members of Christ, is the same thing as for one Member of the Body to wound and destroy another. And it will be as fatal in one case as in the other, for the Members to transgress their several Duties.

200. I consider my self therefore as a part of one great whole, in the welfare of which my own Happiness is included. And without regarding any particular or separate Interest, endeavour always to pursue that which in it self and absolutely speaking, is the most Public, Universal, and Greatest Good; and to avoid that which absolutely and in it self is the greatest Evil. Which Principle rightly understood and strictly pursu'd, will at once fill up all the offices of Justice and Charity, and every other Obligation. Let us then enquire what are the measures and degrees of Good and Evil.

201. Now not to be too Metaphysical, or tedious in this Enquiry, I take the Glory of GOD to be the greatest Good, and the Offending of GOD to be the greatest Evil, and that every thing is more or less Good or Evil, according as it conduces more or less to these. By the Glory of GOD, I understand the Manifestation of the Divine Attributes, according to the Eternal Reason of things; which some call the Rule of Order. Now this Rule is nothing else, but that Way which the Wisdom and Perfection of the Divine Nature oblige GOD to Act, whenever He thinks fit to exert His Power
and

and shew forth His Glory. And because His Goodness is over all His Works, He is pleas'd to take the greatest Glory in the display of this Attribute. And therefore, by offending GOD, I understand those hindrances which Rational and Free Agents put in their own, and in each others way, towards the attainment of that Happiness which the Wisdom and Goodness of GOD originally design'd them. It must also be observ'd, That there can be no comparison among Evils of the greatest kind, for all Offences against GOD are at all Times and in all Circumstances utterly to be avoided. And tho' some of them may be more heinous than others, on account of certain aggravations, yet none of them can ever be the object of choice, because being of the same Evil Nature, they are in this respect equally Evil: So that when we speak of greater or lesser Evils, of which the one may be chosen to avoid the other, it must always be understood that the Evil to be chosen is in no respect Sinful. Or as the Learned distinguish, it must be such an Evil as is barely a Pain or Punishment, not such an Evil as is in any manner a Guilt or Sin.

202. Upon the Principles of Reason, the good of *many* is preferable to the good of a *few*, or of *one*; A lasting good is to be prefer'd before a Temporary; the Publick before the Private. And upon Christian Principles, which I shall here take for granted, having as I think already prov'd the Authority of Holy Scripture, the good of the Mind is infinitely preferable to the good of the Body; Spiritual Advantages to Temporal; and Temporal are to be valued among themselves, in proportion as they contribute to Spiritual and Eternal. Christians are Members one of another, and therefore the good of my Neighbour is not to be separated from my own good, but to be estimated with it.

203. From all which it follows, *First*, in reference to Superiors, 'tis better that I endure the Unreasonableness, Injustice, or Oppression of a Parent, a Master, &c. than that the Establish'd Rules of Order and good Government, shou'd be superseded on my account. 'Tis better that my just pretensions shou'd be thrown out, and my Merit, if I have any, shou'd be disregarded, than that I or any other Private Person shou'd be our own Carvers, and force Rewards from our Superiors. 'Tis better that I shou'd submit to an unjust Sentence, than that there

there shou'd be no end of Strife; and that some Private Persons tho' ever so Innocent shou'd suffer, than that the Majesty of Government, and herein the Divine Authority shou'd be violated, and the Public shou'd be disturb'd.

204. In regard to Inferiors, I consider, That since the good of many is a greater good than the good of one, it is therefore to be prefer'd, even tho' I be that one. That all Authority being deriv'd from GOD's Absolute Dominion, which Dominion in its last resort arises from the Excellency of His Nature, by which He is our Creator, Preserver and constant Benefactor; consequently the reason and ground of Superiority is the suppos'd Excellency of the Superior. But because Order and Government must be maintain'd, which cou'd not be, considering the Corruption and Partiality of Mankind, were every one left to be Judge in this matter, therefore we must Submit to him, who by the Laws and Usages of the Place, or by Prescription when there is not a better Title, has a claim to Superiority, even tho' he be not really better than his Neighbours. However the Superior ought to consider, That tho' for order sake his Will must take place in all Cases wherein GOD, and under GOD his proper Superior

Superior if he has any, have not determin'd; yet since this is only upon supposition that his Will is most agreeable to Right Reason, that is, to GOD's Will, in a conformity to which our true Excellency consists, if the Will of an Inferior be more Reasonable than the Will of his Superior, then according to the Reason of things, *that* is preferable to *this*.

205. As to Mankind in general, among whom there is no Natural inequality, but what arises from their different participation of those Divine Excellencies which GOD is pleas'd to communicate to them; of which Excellencies, Authority and Dominion, tho' not best in it self, is to be most observ'd and respected by us, because Government depends upon it, and without Government Mankind cannot subsist: I consider, That it is not only Inhuman, but even Devilish, to hurt or vex my Neighbours, for no other advantage to my self but the Unnatural pleasure of seeing them Suffer; That their greater good is preferable to my lesser good; and that a less Evil suffer'd by me, is not so bad in it self as a greater suffer'd by my Neighbour. Therefore it is not Reasonable, and consequently not best, that my Neighbour shou'd endure an Evil to procure
cure

cure me a Good not equal in degree to that Evil; or that I shou'd refuse Pain or Loss to procure for another a Good that out-weighs it. Much more am I oblig'd to deny my self a little Good, in order to obtain a great one for my Neighbour; and also to suffer a less Evil, to keep him from a greater. Nor shall I in the main, and taking the *Future* into the computation, be a loser by giving my Neighbour in these cases, and for the *present*, the Preference. For to Act thus is in reality to pursue my own greatest Good, which they, and they only provide for, who conform themselves in all things to the Will of GOD, who is no Respector of Persons, and therefore does not, absolutely speaking, Will a Good to any one of His Creatures that tends to the greater Evil of another; but who by the Prerogative of His Nature, always Wills the greatest Good.

206. To descend to particulars; since every one has a just Claim to certain Rights and Properties from the Laws of GOD or Man, 'tis fit that my Appetite shou'd give place to his Rights, and that it shou'd never be gratify'd to their Prejudice. For Justice is preferable to Inclination, nay, even to Necessities; it being better I shou'd suffer some real wants,

wants, than that by invading my Neighbours Property, the Laws of Society and good Government shou'd be broken. And besides, it is a Fundamental Rule, That among Corrupt Mortals no Man shall be his own Carver, or Judge in his own Case to his Neighbour's damage.

207. It is much better that I shou'd want some of the Conveniencies of Life, than that any of my Neighbours shou'd want the Necessaries; nay, that I shou'd abridge my self in what I may reckon Necessaries, rather than that they shou'd be driven to violent Necessities and grievous Wants. For unless this be the Duty of every one who Loves GOD and hopes for His Love, I know not how to make Sense of that Scripture, *Whoso hath this World's Good, and seeth his Brother have need, and shutteth up his Bowels of Compassion from him, how dwelleth the Love of GOD in him?* And surely a well-temper'd Mind, will make us look with greater Joy on the covering we have put upon our Neighbour's Back, than on the gaudery lavish'd on our own. Every Morfel the hungry Soul swallows so favorily, will afford us a higher *goust*, than all that Cost and Luxury can furnish for our own Tables. And we shall find a much greater Pleasure in making
our

1 S. John
3. 17.

our Neighbour's Heart Rejoyce, than in gratifying any of our own Appetites.

208. Nor is it only Charity but Justice, that requires our Superfluities shou'd be laid out upon our indigent Brethren. All that which in the opinion of the Soberest and Wifest Persons, exceeds the Necessities and Moderate Conveniences of Life, according to that Rank which Providence has plac'd us in, not according to what we can compass, or to the Extravagancies of other People, is a Superfluity in GOD's account, whatever it may be in ours. So that tho' we may not be unjust to this or that particular Person, it is certainly an Injustice with respect to GOD, to waste upon our selves those Goods of His, which He committed to our Stewardship to no other end or purpose, but that they shou'd be spent in supplying our Neighbour's wants.

209. Therefore all that which we *cannot use*, is due to our Neighbours; but I cou'd never understand upon what just ground we presume to give them that which we *will not use*, because not good enough for us as we suppose: Unless it is upon account of a Public-Character, and to maintain that Dignity and Station the Government has plac'd us in; Splendor and Shew being the trappings

trappings of Authority, which it must put on to raise a Veneration in the Vulgar, who won't be mov'd by better Reasons. Or else by Stipulation and Agreement, since it is not unbecoming to give another that which he has fought and submitted to. Or if neither of these, then the real, not pretended Necessities that Education and Custom have brought upon us, may be the excuse. For these do sometimes produce wants, that can't so readily be provided for, as the Simple and Natural Necessities of others, whose way of Living has been less delicate, may: But this is far from being an advantage, 'tis indeed the contrary, he being farthest remov'd from Unhappiness, who has the fewest Wants, and such as are most easily supply'd. In the last place, we may make some allowances to our selves to avoid Singularity and Affectation, and in compliance with the Decent, not the Extravagant Customs of those among whom we Live. But excepting these Reasons, there's no manner of ground, why I, or any other Person, shou'd conclude that to be good enough for another which we don't think good enough for our selves. And it is without dispute a greater Pride in us to profer our Offals to our Neighbour, than it can be in him to refuse or dispise them.

210. If our Neighbour is more capable of serving the Public, that is, if Wise and Unprejudic'd Persons, or our Governors, whom we are to suppose Wise and Impartial out of the Respect we owe them, think so, 'tis much the best to give way quietly to his pretensions, for to oppose, were not only an Injury to him but even to the Public.

211. It is not only Unmannerly and Rude, but even Unchristian, and a certain effect of Pride and Assuming, whatever shew of Humility they may put on, who take upon them to Interrogate their Neighbour concerning himself, and much more concerning others, when they have no Authority to ask such questions, and there is no manner of Reason they shou'd be satisfy'd in their Inquisitiveness. For this is not only a Proud and Unjust encroachment upon anothers Rights and Liberties, who tho' he is oblig'd to communicate all useful Truths, yet may lawfully keep his own Affairs to himself, shou'd do it in Prudence, and ought in Faithfulness or Charity, to conceal what he knows concerning the Affairs of others: But these Questioners do also tempt their Neighbour to Lye, when they leave this the only way to prevent such discoveries as they

they ought not to make, and which against all Right and Justice and good Breeding, they will draw from his silence; they force him to Rudeness or Disrespect to themselves, or to other Inconveniencies which he desires not to fall into.

212. However it is better to suffer these than to Lye, or which is the same thing to Equivocate, or to betray a Trust, or to speak an Uncharitable Truth; and the best way is to get as much out of the reach of these Inquisitors, as Charity and Civility will allow. For Truth is due to our Neighbour, because as the Apostle argues, *We are Members one of another*, and to put off Lyes in its stead, is to destroy Conversation and Civil Society. But it is also a great Injustice and unsufferable Tyranny, to pump and rack him for Truths that don't belong to us. Lawful Authority, Justice or Charity may, but Impertinent Curiosity can never justify such Pretensions.

213. As to Injuries, 'tis better that I put them up even from Equals and Inferiors, letting things rest as they are, than that I multiply Injuries by returning them. 'Tis better to make my Enemy my Friend by Forgiveness and noble Beneficence, than to continue him my
Enemy

Enemy by Revenge. 'Tis better that I suffer some light Injury, such as I can well enough bear in my Fortune or Person, than that by seeking Legal Reparation, I bring an intolerable, or very great damage on my Neighbour. For nothing but a Just Authority deriv'd from GOD, and a pure Intention to use it for His Honour and the Benefit of His Subjects, in the Reformation of the Guilty, or to put a stop to their Wick- edness for the Benefit of the Innocent; or lastly, as a warning to others, That they may hear and fear, and avoid the like Iniquity; nothing but this can justifi- fy the inflicting Severities and Punish- ments on our Fellow-Creatures.

214. It is better that I suffer in my Estate or Conveniencies, than that ano- ther suffer in his Reputation, which is not to be expos'd on any account unless the greater good of a third, or more Persons. A Knave may be detected, but not barely because he is a Knave, but because his conceal'd Knavery may be Injurious to Honest and Unsuspecting People. But I am not to expose my Neighbour on any other Prospect, for 'tis possible he may Repent, and so the reason of his discredit ceases, when the ill effects of my needless exposing him, remain and are irreparable. Nay, if I
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shou'd go further, and add, That upon the same ground I am to prefer my Neighbour's Reputation before my own, supposing him a Person of greater Consideration, and whose fair Character may do more good, I shou'd not exceed the Truth, nor it may be what some have Practis'd.

215. To be sure, no Temporal Interest of mine how great soever, be it Estate or Life it self, or what in my reckoning is more than either, a clear Reputation, ones Quiet and Health, none of all these, nor all of them put together, are to be put in the balance with my Neighbour's Soul. Whose Eternal Interest I am to prefer before all considerations whatever, except the Salvation of my own and other Souls. For this is truly to seek G O D's Glory, and to pursue my own good in the best manner, and to most purpose.

216. Hence it is, That the damage we do to one anothers Souls, by tempting them to Sin, by turning them off from a Vertuous Course, or stopping and hindring them in it, and in a word, by laying any sort of Impediment or Stumbling-block in their way to Heaven, is call'd emphatically in Scripture *an Offence*, as being a complication of Sins, and one of the biggest Transgressions.

For

For it is of all other Sins most opposite to GOD's gracious Intentions towards Mankind, and hurts the Body of Christ in its tenderest Interests. It offers GOD the highest Dishonour by hazarding at least, if not ruining a Soul that is so dear to Him; it robs our Lord of the Price of His Blood; does our Neighbour the greatest and most irreparable Injury; and in fine, draws down our own Souls in the Ruin we bring upon our Brothers. A frightful Sin, and yet daily, nay hourly committed, even for our Sport and Entertainment, and so habitual have we made it, that it goes down without any remorse! For not being sensible of the worth of our own Souls, we are not affected with a due concern for our Neighbour's; exposing those to infinite hazards, the wonder is less that we expose these.

217. St. Paul brings every thing that is an occasion to fall in our Brothers way, *Rom. 14* every thing whereby he stumbleth, or is *13, 21.* offended, or is made weak, within the verge of this heinous Sin. The consideration of which is a matter of great Importance and vast Extent; so that besides my own Inability, it is not possible to treat of it in the short bounds of this Letter, with that accuracy that it deserves. I

shall therefore but barely name the direct and obvious way of tempting our Neighbour to Sin, such as a Superiors commanding it; or any ones advising, or perswading and alluring others to be Partners in his Guilt; or assisting, encouraging, excusing, or justifying them in Sin; or setting them an ill Example; or bringing up an evil report upon a Christian Life, these being so happily observ'd by the excellent Author of *The whole Duty of Man*. A Book to which I beg leave to refer your Ladyship for a more perfect account of what in many places I have only hinted at, and which Women have a peculiar claim to, because there are many probable Arguments to back a current Report that it was writ by a Lady.

218. That which I mean to take notice of, is the Scandal we may give by what is commonly call'd our Innocent Liberties; and by our Indifferent, or even our Good and Vertuous Words and Actions. Because the Scandal St. Paul so strictly reproveth, *Rom. 14.* and *1 Cor. 8.* was not instanc'd in any thing directly Sinful, but in an ill use of Christian Liberty in things indifferent. And Matth. 18. those *Offences* our Lord so severely threatens and warns us against, arise from some thing of great Use and Service,

Service, a *Foot*, a *Hand*, and an *Eye*; yet if even these be occasions of *Offence*, the one must be *pluck'd out*, and the other *cut off and cast from us*.

219. Every one knows that Negative Precepts always oblige; for it can never be lawful at any Time, or in any Circumstances or Exigencies, or upon any Occasion, to do that which GOD has expressly Forbid; unless He shou'd expressly Command it, which is a revocation of the former Precept; and which seems to me to be the case of the *Israelites* in spoiling the *Egyptians*, and of *Phineas*, *Ehud*, *Sampson*, and other Zealots under the Law, who had express warrant for what they did beyond the stated Rule and Law. On the other side, Affirmative Precepts, tho' of perpetual Obligation, don't oblige equally at all times, but take place according to our power and opportunity of performing them.

220. It is our Duty to Worship GOD, and to do Acts of Charity to Mankind, but these are to be perform'd in their seasons; for were we continually employ'd in the one, we must of necessity omit the other. So that the time being left to our discretion, they become unlawful to us at such a Time, and in such Circumstances, in which they are attended with foreseen and certain Scandal.

dal. Nay, if the Scandal be but probable, unless the present occasion be so urgent that it will be Sin to omit it, or that the present and certain good, outweighs the danger of the probable Scandal, they are to be deferr'd to a fitter opportunity.

221. Much more do Actions barely Lawful, because not forbidden, become Unlawful when attended with any sort of Scandal, if it was in our power to prevent it. Because tho' our Neighbour may be unreasonable in taking occasion to Sin from our Innocent and Indifferent Actions; yet we are much more unreasonable, if Knowingly and Wilfully, or even when there is but a probability of such a danger, we hazard our Neighbour's Soul, and consequently venture Dishonouring and Offending GOD, rather than forbear our own Pleasure or Profit, it may be only our Humour or Diversion. Nor are we less guilty before GOD in offering the Scandal, or in want of due care to avoid it, tho' our Neighbour proves so Wise or so Good as not to *Take*, or so Happy as not to be *Hurt* by it; the Offence we intended or might have given being the same, tho' it happens to fall only on our own Head.

222. Ill Principles, Vicious Inclinations, or Carelessness and Inadvertency, may exclude us from the Kingdom of Heaven as well as great and notorious Sins. I do not say, That all sorts of Ignorance or Error, even in Fundamental Truths will Ruin us, for such is the Goodness of GOD that He does not take advantage of our invincible, or next to invincible, mistakes. But wilful and indulg'd Ignorance and Error are certainly ruinous; and what degree of application, diligence, and caution is necessary to avoid this, is not easily determin'd. So that the Principles of Faith and Practise, are not such a matter of indifferency as some wou'd insinuate. And since the Kingdom of Heaven is to be taken by violence; since the Foolish Virgins, and Slothful Servant, whose negligence is the only fault we read of, were shut out, and cast into outer Darkness, it is not to be doubted, but that we may lose our Souls by want of diligence to save them. As for Vicious Inclinations indulg'd, or that Perversity of Will which alienates us from the Life of GOD, this without question excludes us from the Enjoyment of Him. We may therefore become guilty of Scandal, not only by a direct Tempting our Neighbour to Sin, whereby

we become accessory to all the Evil effects that this Temptation may produce; but also by contributing to his Ill-principles, Vicious Inclinations, or Supine Carelessness any manner of way.

223. It will be necessary then for us to consider, How much of our Neighbour's Guilt we have to answer for? and how many Souls we have expos'd to Ruin? By venting, or propagating, or by neglecting as much as we can in our several Stations, to discourage and suppress Atheistical, Immoral, and Unchristian Principles. By our Professions of Religion, whilst we shew little or nothing of the Life and Power of it in our Conversation; or whilst amidst all our Pretences to it; we indulge our selves in some flagrant Sin. From whence our Neighbours are tempted to conclude, That either all Religion is a Cheat, or else that it allows *some* Transgressions upon *some* Occasions; than which there can't be a greater Reproach to the Holiness of its Author.

224. How often have our Discourses, and how much oftner have our Practices degenerated from the Purity and Severity the of Gospel, whilst the Young and the Unwary have been tempted to think,
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and say, and do, according to the Pattern that their Elders and Betters have set them? How many times have we hazarded our Neighbour's Soul for the sake of our Reputation or Estate, our Party or our Pleasures, it may be for our Sins? What shall we say for our selves who make it a Diversion to stir up in our Neighbour any sort of Passion? either out of a Foolish Vanity and to gain Admirers; or that we may have the malicious gratification of finding and triumphing over his Weakness, and reducing his Vertue to our own poor level; or else in pure spite to vex and torture that Vertue we can't overcome. How often have we pour'd Vinegar instead of Balm into the wounded Spirit, and by our Insolence and Oppression provok'd him to Curse us in the bitterness of his Soul, and to cry to his Patron and Avenger against us? How many of our Diversions if they are not directly Sinful to *us*, but that our Heads and Hearts are strong enough to bear them, are at least infectious and dangerous to *our Neighbours*, who are encourag'd in the use of them by our Example? Exciting a generous Emulation, which the Apostle calls *provoking to Love and good Works*, has some-what noble in it, and agreeable to the dignity of Human Nature; but vying in
Trifles

Trifles and Sins, alas! what is it but the very height of Madness and Folly?

225. I wou'd fain know what good or reasonable End a Woman can propose to her self, by all the Arts of Coquetry? What can be the consequence, but her being at first the Admiration, and in a little time the very Scorn of Fools? How many attacks have we made upon our Neighbour's Humility and Meekness, Fortitude, Charity, and other Vertues? under pretence forsooth! of trying and exercising them, which is GOD's Prerogative, and which we audaciously Usurp; We, who neither know our Neighbour's Strength, nor are able to give him necessary Assistance, and are therefore accountable for the damage he may suffer by such Presumptuous Trials. How many things have been said and done, for no better Reason than to expose our Neighbour, to lead him into Error and Folly, and for ought we know into Sin, for no body can tell where a Temptation will stop? How little do we regard what Jealousies and Suspicions our Censures, our Tale-bearing and Tattles may cause? what a blot they may bring upon our Neighbour's Good-name, and this shadow being gone, how it may tempt him
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to quit the Substance; or to what returns our ill usage may provoke him? What concern do we shew for those Animosities and Feuds our Foolish and Inconsiderate, our Selfish and Indirect Words and Actions may create? such as when we have made the best of them, we can only say, That they are not directly Sinful, but which are of Ill-report, and therefore give just cause of Censure, estrange the nearest Relations, extinguish, or at least bring a coldness on Christian Charity; and which considering our Characters and Circumstances, are neither honourable nor decent in themselves, nor fit for us. Such as not only bring a Reproach upon our selves, but even a Scandal and Dishonour upon Wisdom, Vertue, and Religion.

226. For instance; No body can say, that generally speaking, it is unlawful for any Woman to Converse with any Man, there may perhaps be some advantage in it, he may assist her in her Worldly Affairs, may Improve her Understanding, or be the Guide of her Soul. But yet, if either the Privacy or Frequency, or any other Circumstances attending this Conversation, is of Ill Report, or gives occasion of Scandal; either by affording those who will make
an

an ill use of such an Intimacy, a pretence to encourage themselves in it by her Example; or by bringing a suspicion or blemish on her Reputation, or any other way; She is oblig'd in Conscience to remove the Stumbling-block, either by changing those circumstances which gave the Scandal; or else by that which is much the best, because the only sure proof of *Innocence*, by breaking off the Conversation. For she can't well pretend any damage to her Soul by this; her Soul which is the only thing preferable to her Reputation, and that is to be consider'd before the Scandal: Or if she makes this pretence, such a wild supposition gives too much Reason to conclude, That the Censure she suffers is just. If she gives her necessary support, or the prejudice she may suffer in her Estate for the Reason; besides that a Woman of Honour prefers an unspotted Name before any of these Considerations; she owes so much to her self and the World as to give it all the satisfaction in her power, by making this out clearly. And if she is resolv'd at all hazards to continue the Conversation, she shou'd at least converse so openly and in such an unsuspecting Manner, as may excuse her in the Judgment of all Equitable Persons, which is very possible, as Censorious as the World

World is, unless she is so Imprudent and Obstinate, not to say so Guilty, as to think to justify one Error or Folly by another.

227. But where are they who consider all the consequences of an Action, before they venture on it? Most of us think our selves very good Christians if we do nothing that's plainly and directly Sinful. For as to the evil effects of our Actions, the dangers they may draw upon our own or our Neighbour's Soul, the Scandal whether Probable or Evident, we never regard it. But notwithstanding those most severe denunciations in Holy Scripture against him *by whom the offence cometh*, and that we are assur'd we shall one day find, it had been better to have parted with what was dearest to us, nay even to have had a *Milstone hang'd about our Neck*, and to have been drown'd in the depth of the Sea, than to have offended the least and most despicable Person; we are forward to say with Cain, *Am I my Brother's Keeper?* What's that to me how others take *my* Actions, am I accountable to every little body for *my* Innocent Liberties? or shall I suffer them to set up to be *my* Censors?

228. To which I shall reply in the Apostle's words, *now walkest thou not Charitably: Destroy not him with thy Meat,* Rom. 14.
thy Dress, thy Play, thy Company and 15, 21.
Con-

Conversation, thy way of Living —
 or whatever it be, that grieves him
 1 Cor. 8. *for whom Christ died.* But take heed, least by
 9, 12, 13. *any means this Liberty of yours become a Stum-
 bling-block to them that are weak. For when
 ye Sin so against the Brethren, and wound
 their weak Consciences, ye Sin against Christ.*
 So that whatever is the opinion of the
 World, or however Wise and Great it
 may seem in our Eyes to follow our own
 Humour, or to stand upon what we
 may call our own Right, without any
 regard to our Neighbour, sure I am, it
 is not Christian. Such an insensibility
 towards our Brethren plainly shews,
 That we are not Living Members of the
 Body of Christ, for *if one Member suffer,
 all the rest suffer with it.* Nor is it at all
 agreeable to that strict charge our Lord
 lays upon us to avoid Offences; or to
 the Direction and Example of the Cha-
 ritable Apostle, who tells us he wou'd
neither eat Flesh nor drink Wine, that is,
 he wou'd forbear the most innocent en-
 tertainments, nor wou'd he do *any thing,*
 any thing that might be omitted with-
 out Sin, *whereby his Brother Stumbleth, or
 is Offended, or is made Weak.*

229. But our Duty to our Neigh-
 bours is not barely Negative; it is not
 enough to do them no Hurt, we must
 do them all the Good we are able; as in
 all

all other instances, so especially to their Minds which are truly themselves. Therefore, besides taking care to give my Neighbour no Offence, I must do what in me lies to remove all the Stumbling-blocks which himself or others may have put in his way to Heaven. This Duty goes a great way where there is Authority and Power, such Superiors being in great measure answerable for the Faults of their Inferiors. But I shall consider it no further than as it regards Equals, which will also take in Inferiors, who are to do the same thing in a Manner becoming their Station, and so far as they have opportunity, and see any probability of Success. Indeed strictly speaking, they only are to be consider'd as Inferiors, who are in Subjection to the Authority of those whose Inferiors they are. For a mere Inferiority in Rank and Worldly Circumstances, does not, as some may Imagin, take away a Christian Equality. 'Tis true, in relation to Outward Respect, and certain Ceremonies that Custom and Order have introduc'd, there is a difference which ought to be observ'd. But yet for all this, the Duties of Christians, except in that particular, are Equal and Reciprocal, and ought to be mutually Receiv'd and Paid (so far as they will bear,

bear, and with a due allowance for circumstances) as if there were no such difference. Otherwise a Person of Riches and Title were very Miserable, he wou'd be a Loser not a Gainer by these admir'd Advantages, did they set him above the Christian Admonition and Advice of those of a lower Rank. Unless good Sense and Vertue encreas'd proportionably to our Wealth and Honour, which is seldom if ever seen. On the contrary, we commonly find, That he who seem'd to be endow'd with Wisdom and Vertue in a low Estate, loses both when he is advanc'd to a high one.

230. As for Christian Admonition, he best knows how to perform it, who can rightly adjust that Divine Command given by St. Paul to the *Thessalonians*,
1 Thess. 4. 11. *Study to be quiet and to do your own Business:* With that Moral Precept given to the *Jews*, *Thou shalt not hate thy Brother in thy heart; thou shalt in any wise Rebuke thy Neighbour, and not suffer Sin upon him;* which if obligatory to a Jew, is much more so to a Christian. Especially since
Lev. 19. 17.
Math. 18. our Lord has extended it to Sins against our selves, which are most like to breed ill Blood in us, and make us regardless of our Neighbour's Good; and has given us particular directions how to endeavour the Offenders Reformation.

231. But

231. But the misfortune is, in this as in most other Points, we leave undone that which we ought to do, and we do that which ought not to be done. Thus, whenever we are pleas'd to Admonish our Neighbour, we take no notice of, or flightingly pass over, evident and indisputable Sins, notorious Errors, and such things as will certainly be his Ruin, such as are Offensive to GOD, or give Scandal to the World; but all our Zeal and Charity (such as it is) is spent in teizing him about disputable Points, to bring him over to our Party; in censuring his Innocent, perhaps Commendable, or very often (all things consider'd) most Laudable Actions; and in carping at such things in his Manners, as do not suit with our Humours, nor conform to our Models. So that we are not forward to admonish our Neighbour of what will hurt him, which is *our Business*, because an Act of Christian Charity; but we pertly correct him for what is displeasing to our selves, tho' we can assign no good Reason why it is so, and this is meddling with *his Business*, and being very troublesome in it, instead of being quiet in our own.

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232. What

232. What a number do we find of those who are Impertinently Inquisitive into their Neighbour's Affairs, when they neither Can nor Will do them Service; but how few who will give themselves any real concern for their Neighbour's Good? They will scarce endure to be inform'd of his Necessity, unless to insult it, and to indulge a malicious Pleasure; or that they may make use of this opportunity to enslave a Mind as Free as their own. It being too sure, That the greatest Pretenders to Liberty, are the People that use their evil endeavours to put the vilest Chains upon their Fellow-Christians, whilst they clandestinely enslave their Minds, which are the true seat of Liberty. For to judge by the Practise of the World, one wou'd think that Christians had no Belief of a Future Reward, there being few, very few, who do any thing but what they suppose will turn to present account. We have no taste of the noble Pleasure of doing Good, nor do we regard it's Glorious Recompence, so seldom is it that we dare refer our selves to GOD, tho' He is the best Pay-master.

233. It

233. It is to no purpose to say how the Duty of Christian Admonition ought to be perform'd, till People are convinc'd how it ought to be receiv'd. Were Mankind as Reasonable as they wou'd be thought, I wou'd recommend it upon the same Motives that make all of us so fond of Flattery. For the Flatterer by giving us a little present and silly Pleasure, ruins our Merit which he seems to applaud. Whereas the Faithful wounds of a Christian Friend, do only let out our Corruption in order to Health and Beauty. Helping us in reality to those good Qualities which the other keeps us from obtaining, by falsely soothing us as if we were possess'd of them. Self-Love, which is often mistaken, is out in nothing more than in this Business; for it is Self-Love that makes us fond of Flattery, whereas if we consider'd at all, a true Love to our selves wou'd make us abhor it. Nothing being surer, than that he who Flatters us only means to *Serve himself*; and that he who Admonishes and Reproves in a Christian manner, has no design but to do *us Service*.

234. 'Tis very true, that an attempt to Reform our Neighbours ought not to be made, without not only a good Intention, but even some Probability of success.

cess. Otherwise, this profess'd Zeal for others, is nothing else but our own odious Pride; and a desire to shew how much we are above them in Prudence and Vertue. We shou'd not take upon us to direct or reprimand others, when we are in Passion, and so not Masters of our selves. To correct in Public, unless upon very extraordinary occasion, and with the utmost Address, shews more of Ostentation than Kindness. And he who does it with Bitterness and Railery, expresses his Wit perhaps, or rather his Spleen, but not his Charity. To aggravate our Brother's guilt by admonishing him at a time when he is not like to be better for it, doth by adding to his weight sink our own Souls. He who corrects in another what he is guilty of himself, who neglects *the Beam in his own Eye*, to have a pull at *the Mote in his Brother's*; and who does not begin his Reformation at home, will do no Service to his Neighbour, but only draw Pity or Contempt upon himself. Human Nature indeed is full of Infirmities, and because we must in *any wise*, without endeavouring to find excuses, and without fear of ill Reception, Rebuke our Neighbour and not suffer Sin upon him; and because it is most unseemly and unreasonable to Reprove others when we
our

our selves are Guilty, therefore we must for this among other Reasons, study and strive to be as Perfect as we can.

235. But it is also true, That be the Reprover ever so Wise and Good, tho' the Admonition is perform'd with the greatest Prudence, Kindness, and Address, unless the Person who Receives it understands his own good so well as to take it as he ought, it will not be effectual. How it is to be Taken is not hard to learn, for he who truly thirsts after Perfection, will be glad of any sort of help, tho' not always the best, in order to it. He will not discourage, but thank that Faithful heart, which neglects it's own Temporal Interests to do him Service. Tho' he shou'd discover more Pride, or Passion, or Malice, than Good-will, he will however make the best of every ones Observation, and know how to use it, tho' it be not to the Admonisher's purpose. And tho' he may be free from the Fault he is charg'd with, the Accusation will at least Admonish him, that he has not taken due care to be clear of the Appearance.

236. Indeed next to the Grace of GOD, and His giving us good Sense of our own, together with Health and Quiet to make use of it, there's not any

Blessing comparable to this of a Prudent, and Honest Adviser. Friend I shou'd say, if I follow'd my own Sense, but I submit to the usage of the World, since we certainly lose what People call their Friendship, by presuming to tell them the Truth, tho' ever so Kindly and Modestly. If there be any such thing as Particular Friendship under the Gospel, which makes us Friends to the whole Human Race, and more especially to the Body of Christ, so far as Power and Opportunity allow; I take Friendship to consist in Advising, Admonishing, and Reproving as there is Occasion, and in watching over each others Souls for their mutual Good.

237. Not but that one wou'd serve their Friend to the utmost in Temporal Affairs. If we had two Coats we shou'd give one to the Friend who wanted it, for so a Christian ought to do for any other Christian whosoever. We wou'd not only abridge our selves of Superfluities, to provide for the decent Conveniencies of a Friend, but even of Necessaries, to relieve his greater Necessities; for this is no more than what all Christians ought to do for one another. Nay, a truly Charitable Mind will cast its two Mites into the Treasury, even tho' they be all our Living. We shou'd not

not scruple to lay down our very Lives for our Friend, for this must be done for our Christian Brethren, when it can be Instrumental to the Salvation of a Soul, when it can Glorify GOD and Edify His Church. What remains then to be done for a Friend in Particular? Nothing that I know of, but to Prefer him in our Charity, because we are best acquainted with his Affairs; and, which is the greatest of all Charities, to watch over his Soul, and to promote his Perfection to the utmost.

238. This indeed is to be done to all Mankind so far as we can, as has been shewn above, but it will not be done to any great purpose, except where we have an Intimate Acquaintance and Particular Endearments. The constant and shining Light of a bright Example; a magnanimous assertion of the Cause of GOD and Religion; a prudent and gentle insinuation of something Useful in Conversation; an undaunted and impartial Correction of Vice when we are Superiors; a Frank condemning it where we are Equals; and the expressing some way or other a Modest dislike even where we are Inferiors; is all that can be done in the common course of the World, and in general Conversation. But we must go further with our Friends; be *instant in Season*, and, as they may think,

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think, *out of Season*; their dislike shou'd not restrain, nor ill Success discourage us from such endeavours as may possibly do them Good. We shou'd watch all Opportunities; attack all Avenues; call in all Assistances to Serve them in their most important Interest. To prevent not only their being Guilty of a Sin, but to secure them from a Folly, from the approaches, the very appearance of Evil, the remotest Dangers and Inconveniences; and to preserve their Reputation as well as their Innocence. Nor shou'd any thing blunt the edge of our Charity, but the impossibility of doing Service. And if after all our *Labour of Love* the Harvest is nothing but Hatred for our tenderest Good-will, as we may make *some Mourning*, tho' not much, for a Dead Friend, so we may be allow'd to weep bitterly for those who *are Dead whilst they Live*; to Mourn for the *Fools* and the *Sinners all the Days of their Life*, since *the Life of the Sinner is worse than Death*.

239. I cou'd never understand the meaning of some who call themselves our Friends, to be sure I cou'd never comply with them, when they expect to be follow'd Right or Wrong in their Principles, Party, and Passions, looking for a blind Approbation, or if they are more Refin'd, an Artful Pretence of being

ing convinc'd of the Reasonableness of all they propose. Who with all their semblance of Humility, are so nice and tender, as not to be able to bear the Truth that wounds, and which for this Reason ought above all others to be consider'd. Who will never endure you, if you presume to spy a Fault, tho' with the kindest Intention, and only in order to mend it. Who will not be help'd to be in Reality, those Excellent Persons which every one must wish to be; but who wou'd be Flatter'd as if they were so already, when alas! they are nothing like it. They wou'd be thought Wise, and yet by *hating Reproof* prove themselves *Brutish*; are above Human Nature as they ^{Prov. 12.} imagine, for they must not be suppos'd liable to Mistakes or Infirmities, or obnoxious to the dangers that have undone their Neighbours; tho' at the same time, they are sinking under Follies that very Indifferent Persons wou'd scorn to be guilty of. People who fancy that the little, unseasonable, the awkward and disdainful good Offices, they do one, (if I may call them good) such as a Generous Mind wou'd blush to offer a Stranger, much less a Friend, ties one to them as their Slave; Not considering that they who do good to the Mind are the noblest Benefactors.

240. Indeed, Beneficence and Goodwill to Mankind, even to those who hate us without a cause, are the very Spirit and Genius of the Gospel. Our Glorious Law-giver when He Convers'd among us, *going about doing Good, leaving us an Example that we shou'd follow His Steps.* Who tho' He was perfectly Innocent, and therefore most unjustly Persecuted, yet *being Revil'd, He Revil'd not again, when He suffer'd He threatned not, but committed Himself and His Cause to Him who Judgeth Righteously.* It being very plain to every one who Reads the New Testament with an Honest Heart, that the Gospel is to be spread and maintain'd only by those Divine Characters it bears. By the Excellency of its Doctrine, the Holy Lives of its Professors, their Generous and Unwearied doing of Good, and their Meek and Heroick Patience in suffering Evil. Thus was it diffus'd over the face of the Earth at its first Appearance, nor can it be secur'd and convey'd to Posterity but by the same methods. What defences may be us'd to secure our Civil Properties is another question, but it is certain, that Prayers and Tears, Strong Arguments, Holy and Peaceable Lives, and the Strictest Obedience to GOD, and to all who are in Authority under Him, are the only law-

lawful ways of defending our Religion; which, Thanks be to GOD we can't be depriv'd of but by our own Fault, it is out of the reach of the greatest Tyrant.

241. To say that Religion won't suffer us to be *Persecutors*, is but a poor and lame account of it, for it enables us to *Ladies Religion,* Triumph over the Rage and Power of *P. 17.* the most violent *Persecutors*; and where it possesses the Heart, preserves us from being either asham'd or afraid of the Cross of Christ. So far from this, that it disposes us to *count it all Joy*, even the very height of good Fortune, when we *S. James 1. 2, &c.* are call'd to bear Witness to the Truth, and to follow *the Captain of our Salvation,* *Heb. 2.* even to the Death, since we are *one* *10, 11.* with him; and cannot *be brought unto Glory* but by following His Steps who was *made Perfect thro' Sufferings.*

242. But if we must not Quarrel with our Neighbours about Religion, that being no fit way to defend the Truth, or to convince them of their Errors, what is there else worth contending for? St. Paul in a Case he speaks of, requires the *Corinthians to take Wrong, and to suffer themselves to be Defrauded, rather than go to Law.* One can't say indeed, That all appeals to the Sword between Nation and Nation, or to Civil Justice between
Private

Private Persons are Unchristian, neither of these being absolutely condemn'd in Holy Scripture, only some undue Circumstances attending them are Censur'd. However, it is evident, that Christians are not to be of a Vindictive Spirit in any measure; those Divine Commands that

Matth. 5. *we resist not Evil, and that we turn the*
 39. *Cheek, &c.* having for certain some meaning. And how low soever we reduce it, they can't import less, than that as

Rom. 12. *much as lies in us, we shou'd Live Peace-*
 18. *ably with all Men.* That we shou'd prefer Christian Charity and Peace before all the Goods of this present Life: And that if after all our forbearance and condescensions, Men will needs be our Enemies, we are not to think that this gives us any allowance to be theirs.

243. Love is all the Retaliation our Religion allows us; by which Esteem can't be meant, since it is neither Reasonable nor Possible, to Esteem any one for being Wicked and Injurious. But we are to *do Good to them who hate us*, as our Lord enjoyns, and according to St. Paul's Comment, for this very Reason because they hate us. And why shou'd we scruple to return good Words for evil, hearty Prayers for bitter and unjust Reproaches, since there are few present

sent Pleasures comparable to this of overcoming Evil with Good? But how transporting will be the Joy, when meeting with our Enemies in Heaven hereafter, they shall be sensible that there admission is in some measure owing to our importunate Intercessions for them, even whilst they persecuted us as *Saul* did *Stephen*, with the most implacable and deadly Malice. And that how much soever they have sought our Ruin, we have been more industrious in seeking their Salvation. This will be no doubt a sweet Revenge, but I know not after what fashion those Minds are turn'd that can relish Revenge in any other instance.

244. For tho' some may fancy that the Command to Forgive Offences is a hard Precept; upon a just view of the matter it appears, That GOD has been very Gracious to us in reserving Vengeance in His own hand. For were it left in ours, we shou'd dart it on our best Friends, there being none that we hate more implacably, than those who have been so Honest and so Kind as to tell us the Truth. Truths which are so much the more necessary, by how much we are the more unwilling to hear them. Truths which will some time or other be clear'd up to us for our Punishment, if we will not now consider them for our Advan-

Advantage. For no body does a Wicked or Foolish Action, but sooner or later it recoils upon them; they are lash'd with the Reproaches of their own Minds, and bitterly pursu'd with the Anguish of their Folly.

245. Is there any thing more strictly Enjoyn'd in the Gospel, or more loosely Practis'd by us who call our selves Christians, than Mutual Forbearance and Forgiveness? We are so far from Forgiving real and great Offences, which yet we are oblig'd to, as we hope for Remission of our own Sins, that we retain our Resentments for the most trifling and imaginary Offence; nay, even for those real good Offices which we are pleas'd to misconstrue Injuries. We say we are in Charity, and then we think we have done a mighty matter; but this saying is all; our Charity never shews it self by its genuine Fruits, it has none of those Properties by which it is describ'd in the Gospel.

246. Were our Enemy as we call him, low and groveling at our Feet, 'tis like we might with a Scornful and Supercilious, or perhaps with a Pitying Air, afford him a scanty Relief; such as might upbraid his Wants, or display our own Generosity, for a little matter will do this now-a-days. But we never Forgive

as G O D does, tho' G O D's Charity is propos'd as the pattern of ours. We do not wait and long to be Gracious; we don't offer Reconciliation, but rather fright People from it by our Haughty and Inhuman Usage; and who is there that pursues the Offender with the most engaging instances of a noble Beneficence?

247. We wou'd not cut our Neighbour's Throat it's true, and this perhaps for fear of our own, but we do all we can to grieve him; we murder his Reputation, betray his Confidence, misrepresent all he says and does, it may be we Slander and Revile him. Not the ingenuous acknowledgment of a Fault, or of what has been falsely taken for one, can remove the rancour of our Hearts, tho' for fashion sake it may smoothe our Brow. Our Hatred is rather encreas'd by it, for we can't endure to find our Neighbour's Charity so much greater than our own. And be the Reparation ever so generous and full, it never restores the real or suppos'd Offender to the Favour lost, as it certainly ought, if not to greater. For he who can so far o'ercome the Pride of Human Nature as to ask Pardon and make Satisfaction, who can submit to any thing for the sake of Charity and
Peace,

Peace, gives such real Proofs of a Christian Temper, that supposing the rest of his Life is any way agreeable to this part of it, we shou'd be highly Injurious as well as Uncharitable, did we doubt the sincerity of his Heart, or refuse to reinstate him in our Favour. For this is GOD's way of Forgiving us, and nothing can excuse us from imitating it towards our Neighbour, but only our Just and Reasonable Fears of his want of Penitence and Sincerity.

248. But if such a Reconciliation ought to attend a Real Repentance for the greatest Injuries, and sure we can neither Read the Holy Scripture, nor say our Daily Prayers, but we must be sensible that it ought! Shall we pretend to be Christians when we continue our Distances and Coldnesses, not upon the score of real Injuries, but it may be for the highest Services? such as are too great to be return'd, and therefore as we fancy, not fit to be acknowledg'd! Services which are not the less tho' they happen not to be attended with desir'd Success; for the most generous and best concerted Designs, are not always the most Successful. A Mind so large as to form a Noble Undertaking, being usually too Great to stoop to those little and base ways, which as the World goes are the

the only method of Succeeding. It may be it is Ignorant of them, which yet is no blemish; or if it knows, yet it disdains to use them. Indeed to Act thus nobly is the certain way not to be Forgiven, those who hate us for our Vertues being our most irreconcilable Enemies. Cou'd they deprive us of this Crown and Glory, 'tis like we might be very dear to them; but tho' we wou'd readily give up any other pretension, this is a price we cannot, we must not pay to purchase their Favour.

249. After what has been said it does not seem necessary to insist on those particular wrongs which Christianity restrains us from offering to our Neighbours, or the good Offices it obliges us to do them. For if I must make no returns to the greatest Injury, by a stronger Reason I must not offer the least, nor be ashamed to make Restitution for any I have been guilty of. I must not so much as Censure, or Judge, or Despise my Neighbour. For tho' I may reckon this Wit, or by whatever other name I may call it, when done to others, I look upon't as a great Injury when offer'd to my self. If I must do all the good in my power to my most inveterate Enemies, much rather to my Acquaintance, Relations, and Friends. And as the *Ladies Religion*

ligion well observes, by consulting our own Reason we know when we are well or ill us'd; so that a moderate share of Sense with any degree of Honesty, will instruct us how we ought to treat others, by shewing us how we desire to be treated our selves.

250. And that I may effectually perform my Duty to my Neighbour, I endeavour to dry up the Springs from whence all Injuriousness, whether Positive or Negative proceeds. Such are Fondness for the World and the things thereof, Envy and Pride, of all which already, only Pride in this branch of it has not been so much insisted on. I therefore add, That our ill usage of our Fellow-Mortals often proceeds from our looking down on these our Brethren, as Creatures of a different Species from our selves, so much beneath us that it matters not how we treat them.

251. Now allowing there is a difference, there can be no great one, since our Neighbour is a Member of Christ, and a Child of GOD, as well as our Selves. GOD is no Respector of Persons whatever we are; He made us all to be Happy, and never intended that some shou'd Riot in Luxury whilst others Starve with Want; that some shou'd be Sick even with Ease and Plenty, whilst others

others are over-burden'd with Sorrow and Care. But having made us Rational and Free, he wou'd have us reduce this inequality, and supply the seeming defects that Providence has left for the exercise of our Vertue. So that those Talents of any kind whereby we differ from our Neighbour, and which we are apt to look on as great Prerogatives and Distinctions, are indeed only Trusts, for which we are highly accountable if we misemploy them.

252. Perhaps I have Five Talents, and my Neighbour has but Two, how do I know but he doubles his Talent, whereas I do not make any encrease, or but a very small one of mine, he then is by much the better Person, and shall have the greater Reward. And it generally happens, that the Rich and the Great stand in much more need of the good Poor Man's Charity and Assistance, than he does of theirs. For all that he wants from them is a little Food and Raiment, whereas they need his help to remove their Ignorance, and to cure the Raging Distempers of their Mind. If he will not flatter them to their Ruin, and dares tell them the Truth, he is indeed the Benefactor; nor is it worth while for a Person of Sense and Vertue to lose his Time among the Luxuries and Follies

of a great Fortune, unless he is allow'd to observe what's amiss, and to use his Honest and Prudent Endeavours to Reform it: For otherwise he cou'd spend his Time, both with more Profit and more Pleasure in the closest Retirement.

253. In fine, our own Common Interest might teach us to be Humane, * Rom. 12. 10. Condescending, and Courteous; * *to be kindly Affectioned one towards another with Brotherly Love, in Honour preferring one another*; and not to shew all the || 3. Jam. 2. 3. 4. || *Respect to him who wears the gay Cloathing*, whereby we become Partial, and Judges of evil Thoughts, that is, False Reasoners; Humanity wou'd teach us this, tho' the Gospel had been silent, instead of saying so much; and taking away as it has in good measure all those petty differences, by making us Members of One Body. So that the most Honourable can't say 1 Cor. 12. 18, 25, 26. *to the less, We have no need of you, but all of them shou'd have the same care one for another: For whether one Member suffer all the Members suffer with it, or one Member be honour'd all the Members rejoyce with it.*

S E C T. IV.

254. **A**S for the remaining Duties, that is, those which we owe to our Selves, one wou'd think that the great fondness we have for our Selves, shou'd keep us mindful of them: But, this like all other Fondness, is usually wrong exprest. To speak as a mere Natural Person, our Duty to our Selves consists in making the best use of our Talents, and hereby aspiring to the highest degree of Happiness and Perfection of which we are capable. But considering it as a Christian, I place it in doing nothing that misbecomes the Relation we bear to Christ as Members of His Body, and in Living suitably to so high a Dignity. Thus the Sacred Text requires us to Reverence our Selves; to *Glorify GOD in our Bodies and in our Spirits which are His*; to *Honour Him with our Substance*, and in every thing that is ours. And this upon the matter is all one with what we Naturally owe to our Selves; for to be a Member of Christ is the very Best thing we can be; and by Living up to this Honour, and by this only, we attain the greatest Happiness and the highest Perfection of our Nature.

255. Now in order to this we must know our Selves, be acquainted with the Weaknesses and the Excellencies of Human Nature, that we may provide against the one and improve the other. We must also Understand the true value and use of all that we possess, that so we may esteem and employ it as we ought. For if we know our Selves, we shall know what is our True Good, and knowing it we shall pursue it. Because every one pursues that which seems to them for the present, to conduce to their Happiness: Nor will they be so senseless as to seek for Happiness where they know it is not to be found.

256. Not to enter into a Physical Disquisition of our Nature, which tho' much better perform'd than I can pretend, must be very Imperfect, since we have no Idea of the Noblest part of us; I shall only consider it with regard to Religion, but this will lead me to enquire whether or no the Mind is Immaterial. Because they who deny it to be so, deny its Natural Immortality, which is one of its greatest and most distinguishing Excellencies, leaving it only a Positive and Arbitrary Immortality, which is no more than what a Stock or a Stone may have if G O D thinks fit. And hereby they leave us no way to
prove

prove our Immortality, to those who don't admit the Authority of the Holy Scripture; and by consequence, they render Natural as well as Reveal'd Religion a matter of no concern to such Persons, by destroying the motive and reason of their Enquiry after it. For tho' no Reasonable Person can doubt that there is a G O D, His Existence is of no great importance to us if there be no Future State, and if we must continue no longer than this short, present Life. Whereas if we are of an Immortal Nature, it is of the highest consequence to provide for a Happy Eternity, by knowing and doing the Will of our Maker.

257. Immaterial being oppos'd to Material, that is, to Extension, or Body (which words I mean to use promiscuously as different expressions of the same Idea,) and consequently an Immaterial Nature being that which has no Parts, and which is therefore Indivisible; it is in it's self Incorruptible and Permanent, or in another word, Immortal. Because, tho' this System of Bones, Flesh, and Skin, &c. which I call my Body, shall within this Threescore Years; and this Wood which is now upon the Fire, shall in an Hour or two; and all other Material Beings shall in their proper Seasons be no more; yet not the least

Particle of Body doth totally perish. Not but that He who Made All things out of Nothing, can as easily reduce them to Nothing; but because it does not consist with the Wisdom and Majesty of the Great Creator to Annihilate His Works. For He does nothing in vain, and can't be suppos'd to Make a Creature with a design to Destroy or Unmake it. So that a Being is Mortal and Corruptible, or ceases to Be, when those Parts of which it consists, and whose particular Composition and Figure is that which denominates it *this* or *that* Being, and which distinguishes it from all other Beings, are no longer thus or thus United, but ceasing to appear under their first Texture and Figure, are therefore very properly said to Be no more.

258. Hence it follows, That a Being which is Uncompounded, which has no Parts, and which is therefore incapable of Division and Dissolution, is in its own Nature Incorruptible, it must always be the same Individual Being, and can never cease to Be. For because it is Uncompounded and Indivisible, it can't be destroy'd from any Principle in it self, nor indeed from any outward force whatsoever, its Creator only excepted; Who, as he gave it Being, has power to resume this Being, if he thinks fit.

But

But then, from the Reason already mention'd, it appears, that He will not Annihilate it; so that the Mutations which Creatures are subject to, arise only from the division and change of the several Parts of which they are compos'd. It also follows, that whatever is in its own Nature Incorruptible, can be so for no other reason but because it is Indivisible and has no Parts. The Change and Dissolution of the Parts, being the only Reason why a Being is Corruptible and ceases to be. If then the Mind be Immaterial, it must in its own Nature be Immortal, and this comes now to be examin'd.

259. That we all *Think*, needs no proof; and that Body can't Think, appears not only from the Incongruity between Thought and Extension, and even from the confession of those who whilst they contend that GOD *can* endue Body with Thought, do also allow that Thought is not in the Essence of Body; whereby they acknowledge, That no Reason can be given why Body shou'd Think, and that all they have to say, is barely that it is not impossible: But it likewise appears, because, having no way to judge of things but by their Ideas, or to distinguish *this* from *that*, but by the Distinction and Difference

Difference of Ideas; therefore when two Complete Ideas, (as Complete is oppos'd to Abstraction, or a partial consideration of an Idea) have different Properties and Affections, and can be consider'd without any Relation to, or Dependance on each other, so that we can be sure of the Existence of the one, even at the same time we can suppose that the other does not Exist. as is indeed the case of a Thinking and of an Extended Being, or of Mind and Body; here these two Ideas, and consequently the things they represent, are truly Distinct and of Different Natures. Now, to be Distinct from a Thing, is all one as not to be this Thing, so that since Thought and Extension are Distinct and Different in their own Natures, as we have seen, 'tis evident that a Thinking Being can't be Extended, and that an Extended Being does not, cannot Think, any more than a Circle can have the Properties of a Triangle, or a Triangle those of a Circle.

260. For there can't be any thing in a Being, or at least not any thing that we can judge of, or Discourse about, but what is contain'd in the Idea of this Being. But Thought is not contain'd in the Idea of Body, the Ideas of Thought and of Extension being as different

different as the Ideas of a Triangle and a Circle, and those are as little capable of the Properties of each other as these are. Therefore Body can't Think; and because I and all other Reasonable Creatures Think, therefore we are something that is not Body. Now all Beings whatsoever, are either Material or Immaterial; therefore since that which Thinks is not Material, it must be Immaterial; and for this reason it is not liable to Separation of Parts or Corruption, as all Material Beings are; consequently the Human Mind is in its own Nature Immortal, as was to be prov'd.

261. Again, if Body can Think, then Thought must be either the Essence or the Mode of Body; or in the plainest words, either the Think it self, or its way and manner of Being. But tho' some may dispute, (how reasonably I am not now to enquire) whether Extension be the Essence of Body, none will pretend that Thought is its Essence. It remains then, That if Body can Think, Thought must be in it as a Mode. But Modes do immediately depend upon, and are inseparable from the Thing whose Modes they are, existing no otherwise but in it. Therefore, if Thought be a Mode of Body, besides all other Absurdities, it will follow, That GOD is an Extended Being or a Body,

Body, otherwise upon this Supposition He cou'd not Think. Unless you make Thought to be a Mode both of Body and of Mind, which to me seems a Contradiction. Because Body and Mind, or Material and Immaterial being directly opposite, and in their own Natures inconsistent; to say that the Mode of the one may be the Mode of the other, amounts to as much as to say, That a Thing may Be and may not Be, at the same time. But we are sure, that GOD who is All Perfection Thinks, and that He is not Extended, for to be Extended, and for this reason Divisible, is a great Imperfection, and not consistent with His Eternity. And since the First Intelligence the Father of Spirits, is not, cannot be Extended, this is a strong Presumption at least, if it is not a Proof, That Body is incapable of Thought, and that Creatures form'd after His own Image are Immaterial, and consequently in their own Nature, and not barely by Positive Institution, Immortal. May we not then conclude, that it is as improper and absurd to say, That Body is *capable* of Thought, as it is to talk of the Dimensions of a Thought or of a Thinking Being? or to say that Thought can be Extended in a strict and proper Sense?

262. But a Famous and Ingenious Author, who does *neither say nor suppose*, Mr. Lock's *Third Letter to the Bishop of* *Worcester.* ** p. 409.* *† Ibid. p. 430.* *that all Matter has naturally in it a Faculty of Thinking, but the direct contrary* *; does also say, † That it is possible, i. e. involves no Contradiction, that GOD shou'd if He pleases give to some parcels of Matter a power of Thinking. And if so, then for ought we know, or can prove to the contrary, our Minds may be nothing else but certain parcels of Matter to whom GOD has given this power. I wou'd not presume to charge this Great Writer, for whom I have a due Esteem, with Contradiction, he being such a Master of Thought and Language; but if the strength of my Imagination does not deceive me, there is something like it in some of his Works. Tho' doubtless it will be thought the weakness of my Reason, and not want of Consistency in him, that makes me Imagine it!

263. This Judicious Writer in his excellent *Essay of Human Understanding* B. 4. C. 3. S. 29. tells us, "That in some of our Ideas
"there are certain Relations, Habitudes, and Connexions so visibly included in the nature of the Ideas themselves, that we cannot conceive them
"separable from them, by any power whatsoever. Nor can we (as he goes on) conceive this Connexion to be
"possibly

“possibly mutable, or to depend on any
 “arbitrary Power, which of choice made
 “it thus, or *cou’d* make it otherwise.
Any Power whatsoever, must as I *Imagine*,
 include the Power of GOD, and there-
 fore having so good an Authority, we
 may *venture*, in this case at least, to
 Third Let. p. 397. *limit the Power of the Omnipotent Creator*,
 and may say, He cannot possibly do that
 which destroys the *Essence*, or changes the
Essential Properties of Things. Or in the
 words of the *Essay*, “Cannot separate
 “that which is so included in the Na-
 “ture of an Idea, that we can’t con-
 “ceive it separable: And by a parity
 of Reason, can’t add that which is so
 excluded from the nature of an Idea,
 that we can’t conceive the Idea capable
 of that addition.

264. Our Author is pleas’d to in-
 stance in the Idea of a “Right lin’d
 Eff. Ibid. “Triangle, which necessarily carries in
 “it an equality of its Angles to two
 “Right ones. This Property being ne-
 cessary to it, as I humbly *Imagine*, be-
 cause it is Repugnant to the Idea of such
 a Triangle, that its Angles shou’d be
 either Greater or Less. But now shou’d
 I with my *weak Reason* and *strong Imagination* affirm, That * GOD may give to
 this Triangle the Property of including
 no Space, or of being equal to a Square;

nay,

* Third
 Let. p.
 397.

may, that He may according to the good
Pleasure of His Omnipotency *, give it a * p. 405.
speaking, a walking, or a dancing Faculty,
and make it able to Eat and Drink;
shou'd I tell our Ingenious Author,
That to deny G O D's Power in this case, Third Let.
only because he can't conceive the manner P. 402.
how, is no less than an Insolent Absurdity;
and a limiting the Power of the Omnipotent
Creator †. Shou'd I grant that the Facul- † Ibid. p.
ty of Speaking, or the Property of be- 397.
ing equal to a Square, is not included in the 409.
Essence of a Triangle; yet this notwith-
standing shou'd stick to my Assertion, that
G O D if He pleases can superadd these Excellen-
cies, tho' I have no more to say to make it
good, than that whatever Excellency, not
contain'd in its Essence, be superadded to a
Triangle, it does not destroy the Essence of
a Triangle if it leaves it a Figure bound-
ed by three Right Lines; for where-
ever that is there is the Essence of a Tri-
angle: And that if G O D cannot joyn things Ibid. p.
together by Connexions inconceivable to us, 405.
we must deny even the Consistency and being of
Matter it self. Shou'd I also add, That
tho' the very Ingenious Mr. L. in his
Essay tells us, That Connexions visibly
included in Ideas, do not depend on a-
ny Arbitrary Power whatsoever, nor can
be conceiv'd separably by any Power;
yet in his Third Letter to the Bishop of
Worcester,

Worcester, he is of another Mind, his Reasonings there allowing us to conclude, That all the difficulties rais'd against a Speaking or Eating Triangle, and one that is equal to a Square, are
 p. 405. *rais'd only from our Ignorance or narrow Conceptions, but stand not at all in the way of the Power of GOD, nor prove any thing against his having actually endued some Triangles with those Properties (tho' every*
 p. 400. *Triangle as a Triangle, has them not) unless it can be prov'd that it contains a Contradiction to suppose it. Shou'd I argue at this rate, wou'd not that Great Master of good Sense, despise such sort of Discourses as the Rhapsodies and strong Imaginations of a silly Woman? And the World its like wou'd not allow them to pass any where as the Philosophical Disquisitions of a free Thinker, and a Lover of Truth, unless it pays a greater deference to Names than Things. And yet I have all along us'd Mr. L's. Arguments, even his very Words, only putting Triangle in the place of Matter.*

265. But let us see what it is that makes a *Contradiction*, according to Mr. L's Principles, that so by his excellent Measures of Reasoning we may determine, whether it be possible for Omnipotency to make a Triangle equal to a

a Square, and that can Eat and Speak ; since I shou'd be as *glad* to Dine and to Discourse with a Triangle , as Mr. L. wou'd be to get a *Demonstration of the* Ib. p. 393. *Souls Immateriality.* Mr. L. *thinks that* Ib. p. 403. *we may say with due Reverence, That Omnipotency can't make a Substance to be Solid and not Solid at the same time ; which as I imagine is as much as to say, That this thing can't be that ; or to be as plain as possible, that the Idea I have of the Table I write on representing it Oblong, I can't perceive it to be Round. That Knowledge consists in the Perception of the Agreement or Disagreement of Ideas, is what Mr. L. affirms, and what none who Thinks will deny. So that a Contradiction is a Perception of such a disagreement between two Propositions, that if the one be True the other must needs be False ; and such an inconsistency between two Ideas as that they cannot co-exist. And tho' they may not be directly opposite as Solid and not Solid, yet so far forth as they are different and distinct it is not possible that they shou'd be the same, and to affirm that they are is a Contradiction.*

266. For instance ; a Sphere and a Cube are not opposite, they are each of them Figures, and Solids ; but being Different and Distinct, that piece of
S Wax,

Wax which is now a Cube, can't possibly in the same time be a Sphere, any more than it can be *Solid and not Solid*. And for the same reason, to say that a Square is a Triangle, or that an extended Substance is a Thinking Substance, is as contradictory, as to say, that Motion is Rest, or that a *Substance is Solid and not Solid at the same time*.

267. Mr. L. does not deny, That we
Eff. B. 4. C. 3. S. 16. have some Knowledge of the *Connexion*
or Repugnancy that Ideas have one with another, tho' he thinks we know this but to a very small degree with regard to Bodies. For indeed, unless we know the Repugnancy of Ideas, we cou'd not know what a Contradiction is. But
Ib. S. 15. yet as little as we know *as to incompatibility or repugnancy to co-existence*, (your Ladiship I hope will pardon these hard words, which I only repeat from that Polite and Ingenious Author,) we may know that any Subject can have of each sort of *Primary Quality* but one Particular at once, v. g. each Particular Extension, Figure, &c. excludes all other of each kind. It is impossible, says he, That the very same Particle of Body, shou'd have two different Figures and Textures at the same time. And therefore, unless he proves as well as supposes it possible, That * tho' Perception is not an Essential Property of Matter, yet
some

* Third
 Let. p.
 402.

some Parcels of Matter may be so order'd by Ib. p. 416.
Omnipotence as to be endued with a Faculty
of Thinking; Matter and Thought being
as incompatible as any two different Fi-
gures and Textures whatever; tho' it
were too much for me to be Positive on
the force of my own Imagination, yet
having so good Authority as the Essay
of Human Understanding on my side, I
will presume to affirm, That it is im-
possible for a Solid Substance to have Qua- Ib. p. 405.
lities, Perfections, and Powers, which have
no Natural or Visible Connexion with Soli-
dity and Extension; and since there is no
Visible Connexion between Matter
and Thought, it is impossible for Matter, p. 406.
or any Parcels of Matter to Think, at least
for us to suppose it contains a Contradiction.
So that, in fine, I utterly despair of
meeting with a Triangle equal to a
Square, and that can Eat and Discourse;
and I find it equally impossible for Body
to Think. Thought and Extension be-
ing as incompatible to the same Sub-
stance, as the Properties of a Square
and a Triangle are at the same time.

268. Further, I know that a Trian-
 gle is not a Square, and that Body is
 not Mind, as *the Child knows that the* Eff. B. 1.
Nurse that feeds it is neither the Cat it C. 2. S. 25.
plays with, nor the Blackmoor it is afraid
of, and the Child and I come by our

Knowledge after the same manner. But how is it that we distinguish one Idea from another? Is it by the Properties that GOD *may*, or by those he *has endued* it with? If by what GOD *may* do, then there's an end of Knowledge, which consists in the Perception of the Agreement or Disagreement of Ideas. For upon this supposition I have no way to distinguish one Idea from another; and neither the Child nor Mr. L. himself can say, whether Omnipotency may not have endued the Cat with the Nurses Faculties. But if I am to distinguish Ideas by their *Essential Properties*, then the not being able to discern these Properties, and more especially my discerning a Repugnancy between certain Properties and certain Ideas, is an unanswerable proof, that it is not possible for these Ideas or the things they represent, to be endued with those Properties. Unless GOD has been pleas'd to Reveal that this is possible to His Omnipotency; for if so, I must conclude that I only imagine and don't indeed perceive that Repugnancy. And when Mr. L. or any other Person can prove from Divine Revelation, that any Parcels of Matter do, or may Think, I shall confess the *Certainty* of the Proposition, and be as fully perswaded of the Truth

Truth of it, as if I were able to Demonstrate it, till then they must excuse me from allowing it Possible for Body in general, or for any *Parcels of Matter to Think.*

269. For I do not find that the Arguments of the Great Mr. L. who is best able to defend the Cause, no not those he thought fit to use against so Great and Learned an Adversary as the Late Bishop *Stillingfleet*, amount to any more than that GOD *can* do what we find He *has* done, (*viz.*) make another Substance besides Body, whose Essential Property, if not its very Essence shall be Thought, and can Unite this Thinking Substance to Body, which is what we call the Union between Soul and Body. For if there is *nothing at all in Matter as* *Third Let.* *Matter that Thinks*, then GOD's bestowing p. 408, on some *Parcels of Matter* a Power of 409. Thinking, is neither more nor less than the making an Arbitrary Union between Body and something that is not Body, whereby this *Composite* has Properties that *Matter as Matter is no way capable of.* So that it is not Body that Thinks, but the Mind that is United to it, Body being still as incapable of Thought as ever it was.

270. Having thus consider'd the bright side of Human Nature, the Im-

material and Immortal Mind, created in the Image of GOD, and made to Contemplate and Love Him to all Eternity; let us now turn our Eyes to our Weaknesses and Imperfections. And alas! they are so many and so great, that the mortifying Thoughts they give us, is perhaps the reason why we care so little for this prospect. To find our Views so short! our Attention so unsteady! our Resolutions so imperfect, so vain! our Prepossessions and Prejudices so inveterate! the byass that Education and Custom, Example and Authority have put on our Minds so strong! the deep impressions that sensible objects have made upon our Imaginations so hard to be wrought off! so lively and affecting, as to disturb us in our closest Retirements, and most serious Contemplations, raising our Passions, and hurrying us in defiance of Reason, into wild Disorders! The power that sensible Pleasures and Pains have over us, and how little we are affected with such as are Spiritual and Eternal! Miseries of Nature that the most Holy Persons groan under; to say nothing of the defilements of the Wicked and Profane. The best of us seldom going further than the Government of our Words and Actions, and this GOD knows

knows very Imperfectly; whereby we only avoid the Shame our Folly wou'd expose us to in the sight of the World: Whilst the Great and Holy GOD, our Lord and Judge, beholds our shameful Disorder and Dishonour! And alas! what avails it to make a fair appearance before our Fellow-Mortals, since all our Passions and every irregular Motion of the Will is manifest in the sight of GOD! And He whom we Love, and to whom we desire to approve our selves, knows all our Deformities, not a Wicked or Vain Thought being hid from Him!

271. How seldom do we Judge conformably to GOD's Judgment, or Will as He Will! we can't see but in His Light, and yet how much oftner do we consult our own Darknefs! how rarely do we turn the Eyes of our Mind towards Him! We are unable to do any thing that's Good but by His Grace, and yet how little do we attend it's Dispensations, how often do we neglect or resist it's Motions! We forget GOD our Saviour who has done so great things for us; and behave our selves towards our GOD, our Maker, and Sovereign Lord on whom we entirely depend, as we wou'd blush to demean our selves towards an Earthly Superior. Our GOD who waits to be Gracious,

even whilst we despise the Good He offers us! Horrible Folly and Ingratitude, who can without Confusion reflect on it!

272. But as our Weaknesses and Wants perpetually remind us that we are Poor, Dependant Beings; *Creatures*, and therefore our very Nature and Existence as such, supposes entire Dependance; so they ought to teach us to Depend in the right place: It being our Privilege and Felicity to Depend upon G O D, and upon Him only. For hereby we are out of the reach of the Malice of Men and Devils, who may put us to some small inconveniences, may unhouse us it's true, by dissolving the Union between Mind and Body; but this is only to send us to a better Habitation, *an House not made with Hands, Eternal in the Heavens*. GOD *will not* hurt us, and therefore nothing but our own perverseness *can*.

273. Our danger then is from our selves, from the Ignorance of our *own* Weakness, Errors, and Sins; from Depending on our *own* Strength, or on any Creature, and forgetting G O D our *only* Support, by whose Grace *alone* we stand. The World is full of Temptations, we are taught to Pray against them every day;

day; but those who Distrust themselves and put all their Confidence in GOD; who watch diligently over their own Infirmities; who humbly and heartily implore His Grace and diligently Use it, shall not be hurt by those Temptations. They shall be enabled to *do all things thro' Christ who strengthens them; He who is in them being greater than he that is in the World*, and therefore if they are not wanting to themselves, they shall be strong enough to overcome it.

274. It is in this confidence that we aspire after Perfection; for tho' we are nothing in our selves, yet so long as we are conformable to the Will of GOD, and Living Members of His SON, this Relation makes us Valuable Creatures, who both may and ought to have a Generous Disdain of such things as are beneath us. *How shall I do this great Wickedness? Dishonour my self by breach of Trust, Ingratitude, and Pollution, as well as Sin against GOD?* said a Chaste and Holy Patriarch. *Shall such a Man as I flee?* was no vain Rant, but the Just and Noble Sentiment of a truly Great Person. And as there is not any thing more conducive to our safety, than a constant sense of our Weakness and Danger, the Grace of GOD always suppos'd without

Gen. 39.

Neh. 6.11.

without which we can neither do any Good nor escape any Evil: So there is not a stronger inducement to avoid the shame of Sin, and to aspire to the Perfection of Holiness, than a due sense of our Dignity as Rational Creatures, and especially as Members of Christ; and of the Great and Glorious Things for which we were Created, and of which we are at present capable, thro' the Grace of GOD and the Merits of our Redeemer.

275. That Esteem for Human Nature, that Reverence of our Selves, or rather of the Holy Spirit of GOD who dwelleth in us, which makes us abhor and disdain a vile Action, and which spurs us on to the highest Attainments, keeping us jealous lest by any means we fall short of them, is one of the most necessary points of Wisdom. Tho' this is plainly what some People mean by Pride, when they accuse their Neighbour of this Sin, not for pretending to any good Quality that he has not; or for arrogating to himself, instead of ascribing to GOD, the Glory of what he has. But for labouring to be in Reality as Good as he can be; for doing what the

1 Cor. 12.
3. Scripture commands, *Coveting earnestly the best Gifts*; and if this is to be Proud, I pray GOD give us all such a Pride as this!

276. It

276. It is then our Duty to be sensible of our Quality, our high Alliance even with the King of Kings, and noble Hopes, the Birth-right of every the meanest Christian, and to be careful to do nothing that misbecomes us; for if we forget to Reverence our selves, it will not be long e're we make as little reckoning of our Duty to our Neighbours and even to GOD Himself. A thing may misbecome us either as it is beneath the Dignity of our Christian Calling, or Human Nature, in general: Or else as it is unsuitable to our Character and Station in the World, and for this reason, not Expedient, nor of good Report, and therefore not fit *for us*; tho' otherwise, and absolutely consider'd, it might be Innocent. This last Case shall be taken notice of, when I come to speak of Reputation and the Circumstances of our Actions; at present let it be remembered, that Sin, in every instance, or whatever may be the Fruit of it, even tho' an Empire shou'd be it's present Income, is Dishonourable and Base. Every Sin being Infamous in the Sight of GOD, the true Judge of Honour, tho' Men have not fixt such a Note of Infamy upon it, as every Civiliz'd Nation has upon all sorts of Pollutions and Dishonesty, Lying, Breach of Faith, and Breach of Trust; which

which make us not only to be abhorr'd of GOD, but even odious to Mankind.

277. As for the Flatterer and Detractor, every one professes to detest them, but all of us are fond of the Flattery and Detraction. Pride is abominable in others, and we believe we see it, both where it is, and where it is not, but who discerns it in himself? Covetousness is a fordid uncreditable Vice, and yet we are all Slaves to Wealth, and he who despises it, is reckon'd a vain Pretender or a Fool. To break a Man's House is Ignominious, but who thinks it so to ruin his Innocent Family by Gaming; or to Seize upon his Estate by Form of Law, tho' ever so Unjustly? There are a sort of Men indeed who pretend to Moral Honesty as they call it, and wondrous Humanity! who wou'd boggle at this Injustice, if you will believe them. But they make no scruple to offer a Woman the most irreparable Injury, to Ruin her Vertue, Honour, and Soul, and to Glory in it! He who takes your Purse upon the High-way, how great soever his Necessities may be, must Die for it as a Villain; whilst he who out of Wanton Ambition Robs his Neighbour of a Territory, or Crown, shall be applauded as a Hero! To put up the Lye is Scandalous, even tho' it be

be our due; but to carry on a Holy Cheat for the support of a Good Cause, or what we resolve to call so; to pursue our designs, by the most Trick-ing and Disingenuous Methods, especially if they are successful, is a Meritorious Action! To suffer like a Christian, and to receive the Glorious Crown of Martyrdom for so doing, in some Men's reckoning is a Slavish tameness; but to Die in a Silly Quarrel, with a Sword at his Brother's Breast, is like a Man of Honour! So equitable is Mankind! but GOD determines by juster measures.

278. *The Knowledge of the World*, which is the skill to disguise our own Tempers and Designs, and to accommodate ourselves to others in such a manner, as that they shall not be able to discover our Aims, whilst we penetrate theirs and work them over to our own Ends, is reckon'd a great Accomplishment, but is in truth a despicable Baseness. For Simplicity is one of the Divine Perfections, it is the Character of the Gospel, (which can't be serv'd by any thing opposite to it's spirit and design) and indeed of a Great Mind, which endeavours to be, what all desire to appear, and what the Gospel aims to make us. A Sincere Christian has no End but such as he can,
not

not only own, but Glory in; his Natural Complexion is better than any Paint he can put on, to shew him as he is, makes the most for his Honour; and being Conscious of his own Integrity, he has no need to Dissemble. Whereas the Artificial Person is self-condemn'd, his Dissimulation shews a conviction of his Demerit, and a consciousness of some Baseness which he is ashamed to own. And besides, when our Actions are Evil it does us hurt to conceal and palliate them; we ought to submit to the shame they merit, as a due punishment of our Folly, and as that which by the Grace of GOD may bring us to Repentance, and so be the cure of it. Indeed it is not necessary to show our selves at all times, for if the Good were so open, they cou'd not live among the Wicked, but whenever we think fit to appear, we're oblig'd to seem no other than what in reality we are. For tho' we may sometimes in Prudence conceal our Sentiments, 'tis always beneath us to disguise them.

279. And so it is to take Revenge, how just soever the provocation may be, or however great the Injury. For Revenge as it Usurps GOD's Prerogative and hurts our Neighbour, so it Degrades and Injures our selves. Because
it

it does but quit scores and set us on a level with our Enemy; or at most shews us to be more Wicked and Injurious than he was. Whereas a generous neglect and forgiveness raises us above him; nor will it suffer People to have the Pleasure of Vexing us, which is often the chief, or only Reason, why they do an Ill-turn. But the doing Good for Evil, makes us a sort of Gods to our offending Brother, and if he has a spark of Ingenuity, it will soften and reclaim his obdurate Heart.

280. But it may be said, Suppose we have receded from our just Rights and Liberties, and even brought our selves into Difficulties, for one who without Cause is our Enemy, and with no other prospect but to provoke him to Love and to Good Works. Tho' we may over-look his Stupidity in being unmov'd with so great an obligation, and so much the greater, by how much the less we valu'd and set it out in Parade: Yet if he only treats us the more Inhumanely, the more disinterests'd and unwearied we are in our Kindness; making no other return but the greatest Hatred for the greatest Goodwill; when the noble sacrifice we have made of our own Interests, shall only bring Inconveniencies on our Selves; but does not as we hop'd, soften the implacable,

placable, nor rouse the ungenerous, nor shame the disingenuous and base Temper; Tho' our own private wrongs might not move us, yet the affront offer'd to Vertue, and hereby to GOD Himself, the horrible Injustice, Uncharity, and indeed complication of Crimes in such a Villanous Return, can't but stir up some Resentments in a Noble Mind; which if in any Case, may be allow'd to be just ones in this. But shall they proceed to Revenge? by no means; that were to wrong our selves because others have injur'd us, who may have us'd us ill, but they have us'd themselves much worse. They are beneath our Anger, for this Passion when conducted by Reason, does not Chasten but in order to Amendment, which those People seem past hopes of, since all our generous Goodness has been lost upon them; so that they are now only Objects of our Pity and our Prayers.

281. Further, since the Mind is Immaterial as we have seen, 'tis evident, That this World and the Things thereof, are not, cannot be its Good; they are of a much Inferior Nature, and their Duration is Contemptible. Nay, supposing them to be Real Goods, and ever so fit to be Enjoy'd, yet how can a Material

terial Good satisfie or improve a Spiritual Nature? how can a Temporal Good render an Immortal Being Happy? And therefore we do very much debase our selves by supposing, That we are the better for having, or the worse for going without those Temporal and Transitory things, which add no Real Value to us; which are so far from being Good, that on the contrary they are very hurtful, unless we are so Wise as to make a right Use of them. But since experience shews that they are more frequently Temptations than Advantages, and the Instruments of Sin than the Exercise of Vertue, there's little reason to desire them; we shou'd rather Fear than Rejoyce when we obtain them, tho' by the most Just and Honourable Methods.

282. Christianity, and even common Prudence, which neither contradicts, nor is contradicted by Religion, when each of them are rightly understood, requires us to make as sure of Felicity as we can; and consequently since GOD has been so gracious as to place our Happiness in our own reach, we shou'd not be so foolish as to disappoint our selves, by imagining it to be in things out of our power, where indeed it is not. He who judges so ill, and has so
T mean

mean a Thought, gives the World too great hold of him, and shall never want Vexation; for besides the instability of all Temporal things, he lies at the mercy of every Ill-natur'd Person, which is perhaps the greatest part of Mankind. But he who places his Happiness only in GOD and in a good Conscience, is out of the reach of all sublunary things, and enjoys a Peace that this World can neither give nor deprive him of.

283. Innumerable are the Advantages we receive by passing a due estimate on the World and the things thereof; that is in Truth neglecting it, or considering it only with respect to the Life to come, which is the true way of valuing it. Not but that the World consider'd in it self, and as it is the Work of GOD is Good, because all GOD's Works are so, but the Shortness and Uncertainty of this present Life, renders it of no worth to us, unless in relation to the next World. And Oh what Security, what Pleasure do they enjoy who regard it no otherwise! They can never be disappointed who expect all from the Omnipotent and Unchangeable LORD GOD, and nothing from this poor mutable World. They are engag'd in no troublesome Affairs, they have

have no Quarrels with their Neighbours, who are indifferent to Money and all its purchases, these being the true cause of Contention, whatever the pretence may be. Their Passions are never Tumultuous, because not plac'd on wrong Objects, and therefore they are the Wings, not the Clog of the Mind. Temptations can't fasten on them, who have neither Hopes nor Fears for any thing this Earth affords. Few People, if any, are such very Devils as to be Wicked for Wickedness sake, it is a desire to avoid some present Pain, or to obtain some present Pleasure, which inclines them to Evil. Therefore they who apprehend no Pain that's considerable but from an Evil Conscience, nor any Pleasure but from a Good one, are not obnoxious to the *fiery Darts of the Wicked*, whether it be the Devil, or his Instruments in Human Shape.

284. One may remember a time perhaps, when they have thought they cou'd not be happy unless another was so; but this was venturing too much on an uncertain bottom, it was besides the Command, and therefore so far from being Excellent, that it was not Prudent. For we are commanded only to Love our Neighbours *as* our Selves, and to wish them all the Good we wish to

our own Souls, but we are not to make our selves uneasie because they *Will* be Unhappy. GOD Himself who is the great Lover of Souls, does not think fit to compel us to be Happy whether we will or no, why then shou'd any Mortal pretend to force another to be Wise and Good, or to drag them out of that Misery which they resolve to plunge into?

285. Indeed, if among all the Chances and Changes of this Mortal Life that are out of our power, there be any one worth our concern, it is *when the Righteous Man turns from his Righteousness*, when there appears any Folly whether great or little in such as are in Reputation for Wisdom and Honour, in which case I had almost said we do well to be griev'd. For besides our Charity to our Neighbour, the Joy a Christian Mind receives from the Good Actions of others as well as from its own, and that being Members of one Body, we ought to be affected with all its Sufferings. Besides this, Vertue it self, and the Honour of GOD are concern'd, and Religion, however unjustly, is disparag'd by the Faults of those who Profess it. A consideration that ought to weigh very much with them who are Eminent upon any account; and shou'd prevail with us either to lay
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aside all Pretensions to Religion, Wisdom, and Honour, or else to take care to Live up to them. And whatever our haste may be when we are spur'd on by our Passions, we shou'd do well to take this heavy aggravation of our Guilt into consideration; if when we are in such circumstances we are fit to consider, and not rather fit for *Bedlam* to which place in Charity and to remove the Scandal of so ill an Example, our Friends ought to confine us.

286. One can hardly think it possible for any Person in cool-blood, and with Eyes open, to forget GOD and himself so much as to fall into Sin and Folly, unless his very Understanding is perverted by evil Habits. Because we always will our own Good, and if we do at all consider like Reasonable Creatures, the way that GOD has prescrib'd us will appear to be the only way to obtain it. Hence I conclude that rash Judgments hurry us on to Folly, and these arise from our Passions, or from an ill use of our Understandings, or from disusing them.

287. I call a Judgment or Conclusion rash and precipitate, how much time soever we spend in making it, if we do not hold the ballance even, by reducing our selves to an indifferency to either

side of the Question, so that we are no longer solicitous whether *this* or *that* be True or Good, but only that we may find what is so. If we are not thus Impartial, 'tis plain we are not led by the Holy Spirit of G O D, and by consequence, are not Living Members of His Son; but are Slaves to our Passions, and under the bondage of Sense and corrupt Inclinations. For *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty*; true Liberty, which consists in making a right use of our Reason, in preserving our Judgments free, and our Integrity unspotted, (which sets us out of the reach of the most Absolute Tyrant) not in a bare power to do what we Will; much less in a petulant Censuring and Judging our Governors, which is not Liberty but Licentiousness, whereby Seducers make us the Instruments of their Passions, under appearance of indulging our own. But subjection to our Passions is of all Slaveries the most grievous and ignominious; because the Mind it self puts on its own shameful yoke, and we are willing Slaves to the vilest Masters. Whereas in other cases, our Bodies only are Slaves by constraint, and perhaps to an Honourable Person, whilst the Mind may be freer than his whose Chain we wear. And therefore

fore did not Compassion restrain one, who cou'd help Laughing to hear a Vicious Man exclaim against Slavery, and harangue for Liberty, he himself being all the while, the most contemptible Slave! He and he only is a Freeman who acts according to Right Reason, and obeys the Commands of the Sovereign Lord of all, who has not put the Liberty of His Creatures in any ones power but in their own. And as Prejudice and the Dominion of Passion is a sign that we are not led by the Spirit of GOD, so it also deprives us of His Influence and Assistance, and prevents the Good he wou'd otherwise do us. For if we are not dispos'd to do GOD's Will except in our own way, if we are not indifferent to the Methods He chuses for us, 'tis plain we mean to Serve ourselves and not Him, whatever pretences we may make to His Service, and are like to be left to the Conduct we make choice of.

288. There are some, tho' one wou'd hope not many, who plainly own that they love their Prejudices, and are resolv'd not to part with them, at least not yet, because they give them present Pleasure, which every one is greedy of. And these People are not to be Reason'd with, for they have depos'd Reason and

set up Instinct in it's place; nor are they to be reclaim'd without the extraordinary Grace of GOD, or some bitter Affliction, which shall spoil their relish of Sensible Pleasures. But Mankind does generally declare against Prepossession and Prejudice, and tho' few of us but are subject to it more or less, we will not be brought to own it. So that in charity one is to believe, that to convince People of their Partiality were to cure them of it. And because few of us are humble enough to submit the Diseases of our Minds to any one's cure but our own, it may not be amiss to consider the Symptoms of that Disease.

289. We may conclude then, That we are not indifferent, but prepossess'd and liable to rash Judgments, when we adhere to Principles which we never Examin'd, which are only recommended by Education and Custom, or by Authority and Interest; and which we dare not Examine because it wou'd be a Temporal loss to part with them. When we have no Principles, that is when thro' Ignorance or Carelessness we are altogether unacquainted with the measures of Truth and Falshood, Good and Evil, and so lie at the Mercy of our own and other Peoples Humours

Humours and Passions as it happens; and when our Principles are not fixt, but are so flexible as to bend to every present Occasion. When we have divers weights and measures, and allow that in our own Case which we will not allow in another's; and without any change of Circumstances, or any sufficient Reason, like or dislike that to day, of which we had contrary sentiments the other day; or act by some certain Rules upon some occasions, and oppose or neglect them in a parallel case. If our Imaginations are agitated, and our Passions inflam'd when we speak or think of a particular Subject; if it takes up our Thoughts, and they pursue it with Pleasure and quit it with Regret; 'tis plain that we have lost so much of our Indifferency and Liberty as this amounts to. For excepting matters of Salvation, there's not any thing worth great Application and Zeal; and if our concern shews it self in other Affairs and not in this, 'tis certain that not G O D's Glory, but our own Passions and Prepossessions move us.

290. It is to me a strong presumption that People are in the wrong, I had almost said and know, or at least suspect themselves to be so, when they are earnest and violent in making Profelytes
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to their perswasion in lesser and disputable points. An honest and impartial Heart may well be warm'd, nay, it ought to be so, in spreading and defending the great Truths of the Gospel and Christian Morals. But fervor in other cases shews that we have either some bye End to serve under a fair pretence, or else that we suspect our cause, and by a weakness incident to Human Nature, think to fortify our selves in it by drawing in Company. Truth and Vertue are open and ingenuous, they neither need nor seek Reserves; they do not fear the Light, for they will bear Examination. And provided our Heads are not weak, nor our Hearts corrupted, their Adversaries Arguments do only strengthen their cause. Error and Vice can never carry their point, but by a partial Consideration; and what but a willingness to be deceiv'd by our Passions, and a loss of our Liberty, can keep us from a readiness to view an Object on all its sides, so far as we are able? And since it is certain that Education and receiv'd Opinions, the Approbation of Men, Passion and Worldly Advantages give our Minds a Byass, we shou'd allow for this, and by suspecting them put as much weight into the other Scale. Being fully convinc'd that there is not
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any thing so much for our true Interest as to receive the Truth in the Love thereof, and we shou'd always act up to this Conviction. Not supposing there's any necessity that such a Proposition shou'd be True, or such a thing be Good, but that it is absolutely necessary for us if we wou'd be Wise and Happy, to find out Truth, and to pursue Good, tho' ever so contrary to our present Opinions, Practices, and Inclinations.

291. In a word, we judge and chuse amiss, because our Judgments are hasty and partial; 'tis our Passions for the most part that make our Judgments thus precipitate and defective, we suffer Passion to lead when it ought to follow; and sensible things, the Love of this World and present Pleasure, is that which moves our Passions. Wise Men in all Ages have exclaim'd against Prejudices and Prepossessions, and advis'd us to get rid of them, but they have not inform'd us how, nor enabled us to do it, Christianity only does this. And it does it by stripping sensible things of their deceitful appearances, and finding us nobler Objects of our Passions than any this World affords.

292. It

292. It shews us the *great things of GOD's Law*, the *Glorious Reward of Obedience*, and *His wondrous Works towards the Children of Men*, which are truly worthy of our *Admiration*. It proposes to us the *Love of GOD*, an Infinite Good; and the *Hatred of Sin*, the greatest of all Evils. It shews us that our *Desires* will not be in vain, when they put us upon pursuing the one and avoiding the other. So that *Despair*, whose business is by the pain it gives, to admonish us that Felicity is not in Worldly Enjoyments, is superseded here, for whatever our lot may be in this World, we are carry'd on by an active and vigorous *Hope* of the next. Which is not disturb'd, but only poiz'd by *Fear*, and kept from *Presumption* and *Security*. And whilst we Fear to offend GOD, we are above the Fear of any other thing. A Good Conscience will, and nothing else *can* unless by accident, inspire us with true *Courage*, or render us *firm* and *bold* in Difficulties, and intrepid in the greatest Dangers. 'Tis that which arms us with a just *indignation* against *Wickedness*, even tho' it be *in high places*, in Persons of Power and Greatness, and excites us to do our endeavour to pull the Prey out of their Teeth. It turns our *Anger* chiefly against our own Sins, which makes

makes it a Minister of Justice, not an Instrument of Revenge. The Law of GOD shows Vice to be the most *despicable* thing; and inclines us to *Pity* every unhappy Person, among whom they are the most so who are under the dominion of Sin. It teaches us to bestow our *Favour* and place our *Delight* upon the *Saints* that are in the Earth, and such as excel in *Vertue*. To whom, as to the great Benefactors to Mankind, the Christian pays his greatest *Esteem* and *Gratitude*; and is *Thankful* in proportion, to every one who does any sort of Good to himself or to his Neighbours. If he has any *Regret* or *Envy*, it is only when Vice goes away with the Recompence of *Vertue*; and how prosperous soever the Wicked may be, all they obtain from him is *disdain*. 'Tis the Good Person only whom we are taught to *Venerate*; and whilst we kindly *Emulate* his Excellencies, to bear him the greatest *Good-will*. The word of GOD instructs us how to be *Humble* without *Baseness*, and to have a Great and *Generous* Mind without *Pride*, by shewing us what is Valuable and what Contemptible; that all Men may make a due use of their Liberty as well as we, which is that which distinguishes them; and that being nothing in our selves, all our Merit consists

consists in our Union with our Redeemer. It convinces us, That nothing is *Shameful* but the living unworthy of this Honour, and that GOD's Approbation, and the Honour that comes from Him, is the only *Glory*. And least we fall short of this, the Gospel instructs us to be watchful over our selves and others with a *Godly Jealousie*. Which prevents *Rashness*, and gives us all necessary *Caution*, at the same time that by convincing us that our Happiness depends only upon GOD and our selves, it banishes *Irresolution*, a Passion that puts a stop to all Excellent and Praise-worthy Actions, and whose only use is to check ill Minds in their career after Evil; as *Remorse* is design'd to correct them when they have done amiss. But whilst according to the Precepts of the Gospel, we exercise our selves to keep always a *Conscience void of Offence towards GOD and towards Men*, there's no place for Remorse that bitterest Pain. We only wash off by a daily Repentance, the daily stains that our living in a Corrupted World contracts. And because Mortal Man as such, is liable to Pain and *Grief*, therefore as Winds and Storms purge the Air, so *Godly Sorrow* purifies the Christians Mind, and renders it more healthy. And how can a Life thus led
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but abound with *Self-satisfaction*? which as a Great Man who had thoroughly consider'd this Subject tells us, is *the sweetest of all the Passions*. None indeed but the Good Christian can have it, or enjoy that *Tranquility of Mind* which is his Portion, both in the Nature of things, and by his Great Masters Promise. Which Tranquility he enjoys in the midst of all outward Troubles, and which is much beyond an Equivalent, for it makes up his Losses even in this World, a Hundred-fold. For the Favour and Love of GOD on which the Christians Heart is fixt, is a fund of Joy that never fails, but after it has made him as Happy in this Life as Mortality can be, secures him an unspeakable Happiness to all Eternity.

293. In fine, we can never be sure of our selves, nor have a comfortable prospect of our Perseverance, till Religion becomes our Pleasure, and it will never be our Pleasure till our Passions as well as our Reason, and by the direction of Reason, are engag'd in it. For these are the great scene of Temptation; and we may take it for a Rule, That whatever Varnish they use, no Action or Passion can be Good or Innocent, which we are afraid or asham'd to own; which we blush at by our selves,

selves, and are in Fury when others remind us of it. For Vertuous Actions and Dispositions, tho' they shou'd happen to be discountenanc'd in a Wicked World, do yet support the Mind, rendering it Chearful, Fearless and Undaunted in owning them. Whereas those which put us in Disorder, which cover us with Shame, and sting us with inward Reproaches, are self-condemn'd. But our Passions have always some excuses ready till they have entangled us, and then they leave us in the snare, to the Reproach and Derision of the World, and to the bitter Regret and Confusion of our own Minds.

294. As to our Understandings, I consider, That GOD did not give us any Talent to lay up in a Napkin, we must therefore improve in our Intellectuals as well as in our Morals. There is no heed to be given to those eternal Disputers who perplex the clearest Case, and bring colours for some of the foulest Sins; and who either to shew their Wit, or to exert their pretended Authority, take the Assurance, tho' perhaps with the softest and most submissive Language, to place themselves in GOD's stead and Judge for us. But tho' it were the utmost baseness to submit to their Usurpation and Tyranny, by parting
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with that most valuable Privilege, and indefeasible Right, of judging for our selves where GOD has left us free to do so; yet far be it from us to pretend to Infallibility and Self-sufficiency; to despise any ones Lights, or to reject their Advice, with whatever Spirit it may be offer'd. For as I plac'd Christian Friendship in giving frank Advice, so I now reckon the taking it among the Duties we owe to our Selves. Nor can we be more unkind to our own Souls, or guilty of a greater Folly, than by supposing we are too Great, or too Wise, or too Good to be Advis'd.

295. And yet after all, we must Judge finally for our selves, as was said in the beginning, because if we determine amiss we must answer for it. Hence it becomes necessary to improve our Understandings to the utmost, that so they may serve us to all those purposes for which GOD design'd them. Nor is it so difficult as Sloth and the Envy of those who wou'd have no body Wiser than themselves, endeavour to represent it. The business of the Understanding is to Contemplate Truth, and the more enlarg'd it is, and more able to attend the greater number of Truths, it is so much the more excellent.

lent. And being we are at present in a State of Probation, the best use we can make of our Mind consists, in furnishing it with such Qualities and Dispositions as may enable it to Judge according to the Eternal Reason of things, especially in such matters as are of greatest consequence to us.

296. So that tho' Moral and Intellectual Improvements may be consider'd apart, they can't really be separated, at least not in a Christian sense. There is a natural connexion between Purity of Manners, and Soundness of Judgment; *if any Man will do GOD's Will, says our Lord, he shall know of the Doctrine whether it be of GOD.* For every Sin, and more particularly, Impurity, Pride, and Worldly Interest, is a Prejudice that shuts out the Light of Truth, keeps Men obstinate in Error, and hardens their Minds against Conviction. And therefore having *Solomon* on my side, and which is more, that Divine Spirit by which he wrote, I shall not scruple to call *the Sinner a Fool*, tho' he be ever so Learned, so Witty, so Ingenious, or what passes with the most for the top of Wisdom, so Cunning and so Worldly Wise. For since Wisdom consists in pursuing a worthy End by proper Means, he whose End is to be despis'd

spis'd and abhorr'd, can't be a Wise Man, but is only the more Foolish, by how much he is the more Artful and Industrious in pursuit of it. But the Christian whatever his Understanding may be in other matters, is Wise in respect of his End, which is the main point of Wisdom; and according to his Capacity he will be Wise with regard to the Means of obtaining it. Indeed I heartily wish that we were all better instructed in this part of Wisdom, and more diligent in the Practice.

297. All Understandings are not of equal reach and brightness, but all may and ought to be improv'd; the most excellent because they are most capable of improvement, and the meaner because they need it most. But whether the having too high or too low an opinion of our own Abilities is the greater hindrance, is not easily determin'd; for those who think they *can't* improve, will no more attempt it than those who think they *need not*. Experience shews, That People often act in this case just contrary to what they ought; it being easier to make some Ladies Understand every thing, than to perswade them that they are capable of Understanding any thing: On the other hand, those

are usually most confident of themselves, who have least reason to be so. I wou'd never advise a Woman to study to improve her Mind, if I did not think her capable; and few things mortify me more than the not being able to persuade her to make a Trial. For cou'd we but once excite in each others Breast a noble thirst after Perfection, placing our Perfection in that wherein it truly consists, the greatest difficulty were past, we might go on with Pleasure, and prosper in our Attempt.

298. But to what Study shall we apply our selves? some Men say that Heraldry is a pretty Study for a Woman, for this reason, I suppose, That she may know how to Blazon her Lord and Master's great Atchievements! They allow us Poetry, Plays, and Romances, to Divert us and themselves; and when they would express a particular Esteem for a Womans Sense, they recommend History; tho' with Submission, History can only serve us for Amusement and a Subject of Discourse. For tho' it may be of Use to the Men who govern Affairs, to know how their Fore-fathers Acted, yet what is this to us, who have nothing to do with such Business? Some good Examples indeed are to be found in History, tho' generally the bad are
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ten for one; but how will this help our Conduct, or excite in us a generous Emulation? since the Men being the Historians, they seldom condescend to record the great and good Actions of Women; and when they take notice of them, 'tis with this wise Remark, That such Women *acted above their Sex*. By which one must suppose they wou'd have their Readers understand, That they were not Women who did those Great Actions, but that they were Men in Petticoats!

299. Speculation is one of the most refin'd and delicious Pleasures, but it is not to be follow'd only as a Pleasure, but as an Exercise and Duty. There is as great variety in Understandings as in Faces, they have not all the same Beauties nor the same Defects, but every Genius has its particular turn, and therefore the same course of Study is not equally fit for every one. The business is, to learn the Weakness and Strength of our Minds; to form our Judgments, and to render them always just; to know how to discover false Reasonings, and to disentangle Truth from those mazes of Error into which Men have hunted her; and whatever Method tends to this End ought to be pursu'd.

300. True Knowledge, and not Science falsely so call, is a *Divine thing*, as an excellent Pen has prov'd it. For to Know is to perceive Truth, and the Perception of Truth is a Participation of GOD Himself who is *the Truth*, and the Participation of GOD is the Perfection of the Mind: But yet all Truths, even among necessary Truths, are not equally Perfective. Were we Created only for Contemplation, or were this the only business of our present State, there might be no great difference to what sort of necessary Truths we apply'd our selves. But being made for Action also, and at present in a State of Probation; and Truth being Infinite, and therefore not to be exhausted by a Finite Understanding, we are chiefly, and in the first place, to consider such Truths as are not only *Necessary* in their own Nature, as *Necessary* is oppos'd to *Contingent*, but such as are also most *Necessary for us* to know, because of greatest Importance, as helping us to regulate our Actions according to the Will of our Creator.

301. Pure Speculations of any kind, do us Service by withdrawing our Minds from Sense, whereby they moderate our Passions, and bring them into subjection to Reason, which those
Speculati-

Speculations enlarge and fortifie. But yet it seems to me, that the Contemplation of Extension, even tho' it be Intelligible Extension, is not so Perfective as Metaphysical, Moral, and Divine Contemplations.

302. It is the misery of our Deprav'd Nature to be too fast ty'd to Sensible things, to be strongly, and in a manner wholly affected with them; and whatever loosens this tye and weans us from them, does us a very considerable Service. But we are not apt to think so, and have ways to frustrate the advantage might be reapt by Speculation. Most Men are so Sensualiz'd, that they take nothing to be Real but what they can Hear and See, or which is some way or other the Object of their Senses. Others who wou'd seem the most refined, make Seniation the fund of their Ideas, carrying their Contemplations no farther than these, and the Reflections they make upon the operations of their Minds when thus employ'd. Men Speculate what will be of use to Human Life, what will get them a Name in the World, and raise them to the Posts they covet. But the Contemplation of Immaterial Beings and Abstracted Truths, which are the Noblest Objects of the Mind, is look'd on as Chimerical and

a sort of Madness; and to study to come up to the pure Morals of the Gospel, is in their account Visionary.

303. Except in the Duties of our Christian Calling, and the little Oeconomies of a House, Womens Lives are not Active, consequently they ought to be Contemplative; for I hope our Christian Brethren are not of the *Turks* Opinion, That Women have no Souls; I heartily wish indeed, that we made more use of them. And since it is allow'd on all hands, that the Mens Business is without Doors, and that their's is an Active Life; Women who ought to be Retir'd, are for this reason design'd by Providence for Speculation: Providence, which allots every one an Employment, and never intended that any one shou'd give themselves up to Idleness and Unprofitable Amusements. And I make no question but great Improvements might be made in the Sciences, were not Women enviously excluded from this their proper Business. Quickness and Penetration our Masters vouchsafe to allow us, whilst they deny us Judgment, and I own it is too true, That too many of us have given them just reason, Gratitude apart. For it is no great sign of Prudence to chuse

a Service when we are Free ; or if a Service must be taken, not to stay till we are offer'd one that's creditable. But this case excepted, I am at a loss to find those instances in which Men in general judge better than Women, even without abatement for the advantages of their Education, which yet in reason ought to be allow'd. Indeed if they can prove that they give more diligence to make sure of Heaven, this will put the Superiority of their Wisdom past all peradventure.

304. However, not to contest whether Learning be their Prerogative or our Privilege; not to deny their Self-evident Principle, and therefore what they do not attempt to prove, *That Womens Understandings are Inferior to Mens*, tho' my blind Soul can't discern it; Since the Duties of a Christian are as much our Business as their's, all I shall contend for, is only that we may be suffer'd to improve our Minds so far as this may influence our Duty. And had I any interest with my Sex, I wou'd humbly intreat them to learn the Measures of their Duty from the Word of GOD and Right Reason, not by Hearsay. Your Ladiship I know does not like me the worse, and I hope all other Ladies will at least forgive me, for persisting

sisting in this desire. For tho' it wou'd not be so easie for some People to make their Markets on occasion, by making Fools of us, were we so Wise as we may and ought to be; yet I'm fully perswaded, it is but a very little Time, e're we heartily Repent of permitting our selves to be made their *Dupes*.

305. The more intirely we depend on GOD, we are so much the Wiser and Happier, but the less we depend on Men so much the better. If a Woman takes them for the only Oracles of Wisdom, I give her up for lost, it being certain that she will find them so Crafty, for I can't call that Wise which is not Just and Honourable, as to serve their own Ends whatever becomes of her. Excellent is the advice of the Wise Jew, *Let Reason go before every enterprize, and Counsel before every Action, and let the Counsel of thine own Heart stand, for there is no Man more faithful unto thee than it; And above all things pray to the most High, and He will direct thy way in Truth.*

306. As it is the Blessing of the Lord that makes Rich, and he addeth no Sorrow, the natural effect of Riches, *with it*; so it is the Blessing of the Lord that makes Wise, and preserves us from being puff'd up with a vain opinion of our Wisdom.

Wisdom. That Knowledge of GOD which none can miss of, who will at all employ their Thoughts about so Divine a Subject, is sufficient to convince them that He is worthy of all their Love. And the *Love of GOD surpasses all things for Illumination*, because it keeps the Mind in the deepest Humility, and most entire Dependence on its Beloved. By the Knowledge of GOD and of our Selves, which I take to be the proper aim of all our Contemplations, I do not mean a curious research into the Divine Nature, which being hid from us in inaccessible Light, we shou'd humbly Adore and not subtilly dispute about; nor a Physical Disquisition of our own Nature, since GOD by denying us an Idea of our Souls, signifies that this is not our present business. But I understand a Knowledge of the Relation we stand in to our GOD, and of the Obligations arising from it. This is the Study of greatest consequence, and tho' we fail of certainty in other enquiries we may obtain it here: And that Wisdom and Integrity which this Knowledge produces, is the true and the only Perfection of Human Nature.

307. An endeavour after which is an employment neither *difficult nor tedious*, for the Yoke of Christ is *easie* and

Ladies
Religion,
p. 20.

and His *Burthen light*, and the *way of Wisdom is a Pleasant Path*: Yet, considering the dignity and importance of the Work, 'tis certain we ought to attend it more than the most of us do. The *Spinsters and Dairy Maids*, (as one Author speaks) and as our *Divine* observes, The *poor day Labourers have ability and opportunity sufficient to instruct themselves therein, without hindring the constant work of their Calling*. And certainly they who are of a higher Rank can't want it, provided their care hurries them no further than the making necessary and reasonable Provisions for their Families, suitable to their conditions; and this they are oblig'd to. But where's the necessity, or what tolerable pretence to *rise early and sit up late, and to eat the bread of carefulness*, only to leave an over-grown Estate to their Heirs, that these may perk up among a higher Rank, with no other Merit or Title than what their Money purchases? Shou'd Day-Labourers, or Mechanicks, or People of better Fashion take this fancy in their heads, what they call their Particular Calling, will I fear allow them little time for their General Calling as Christians. I need not say they had been *better employ'd in endeavouring to be Rich in Faith and Good Works*,
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for it is certainly matter of *Duty*, both as it is the most proper and worthy Employment of a Rational Nature, and because a Happy or Miserable Eternity depends upon it; so that unless we duly improve this short and uncertain Life, we are undone for ever.

308. Ought we not therefore in mere kindness to our selves, where every one tells us our Charity shou'd begin, to make those *Daily Provisions for our Selves and Families* which necessarily employ us, *Ibid. p. 19.* subservient to those Grand Provisions we are to make for Eternity? Nor can he have any excuse who does not in the first place, and with the greatest Solitude, *Seek the Kingdom of GOD and His Righteousness*, who does not discharge the *common Offices of Life* in such a manner as is most for the good of his Mind; setting very short bounds to his daily Wants and Provisions, which is the Scripture *Moderation*; a word that *See Phil. 4, 5, &c.* so many have in their Mouths and so few Practise. For our Holy Religion *moderates* our desires after Sensual Enjoyments, teaches us to Live according to Nature whose wants are few, to deny our Selves, and to despise the World. So that our Worldly Affairs, that is, those which Reason and Religion make *necessary*, tho' perhaps not what most of us

Matth. 13.

45, 46.

1 Cor. 9.

24.

2 Cor. 10.

4.

Luke 10.

42.

us think so, go in a little room. All the rest of our Time being allotted by GOD for our Real Business, our *Merchandize*, our *Race*, our *Warfare*, the *Pearl of great price*, which all considerate Persons strive to purchase, tho' at the expence of all besides; the *one thing needful*, the *good part that shall not be taken away from us*. Nor will the preference we give to Heaven, hinder any of our Just and Lawful Worldly Affairs, for besides all other advantages, it will entitle us to the particular care of Divine Providence, which is all in all.

309. But if he whose present Wants are greatest, must not for this reason be slack in his provision for Eternity, what shall be said for those to whom the Bounty of GOD has left no other Necessities, no other Business but the Improvement of their Minds? Happy People, if they make a right use of these Advantages, but so much the more Miserable for being allow'd them, if they are abus'd or neglected! I can never read the Parable of the Talents without Fear and Trembling; for if he who made no Improvement of his Masters Talent, tho' he did not waste it, was cast into outer Darknes; what shall become of us who have so grievously wasted ours! May the Time past suffice to have been Foolish

Foolish and Wicked, Vain and Trifling, Slothful and Useless, and let us now, even this minute, for this only is ours, begin to exert our selves. And disregarding the Example, or Scoffs and Persecutions, of those who at best only Eat, Drink, and Sleep, Flutter, or Loll, or Prate away an insignificant Life, *let us Run with Patience the Race that is set before us*, and if we have opportunity, *endure the Cross, despising the Shame*, after the Example of our Glorious Leader. Being fully assur'd, That we very much Dishonour both our Lord and our Selves, if we who were Created for the Noble Employment of Contemplating and Loving GOD, and preparing our Souls by His Assistance for the endless Enjoyment of Him in Glory, shou'd take up with the base and contemptible office of making Provision for the Flesh, whether to fulfil its irregular Appetites, or to supply it's pretended Necessities.

310. Human Nature is indeed a Composition of Mind and Body, which are two distinct Substances having different Properties, and yet make but one Person. The certainty of this Union is not to be disputed, for every one perceives it in himself; but we can't attain a clear and distinct Knowledge of it, from

from our present Ideas. No Authority but His who made this Union can justly dissolve it; for no Person has a Right over his own or his Neighbour's Life, or Liberty to dispose of either, any farther than as he can shew a Warrant and Commission from GOD. But I am not at present concern'd with the Magistrates Right, I am only to consider my own.

Matth. 5.
39.

311. The Laws of Men allow me to defend my self against an unjust Assault, tho' it be at the peril of my Neighbour's. But as appears to me, not only some particular Texts literally taken, as this, *But I say unto you that ye resist not evil, &c.* but even the whole current of the Gospel requires me to hazard my own Life rather than my Neighbour's even upon such an occasion, except my Soul, or any other Person's, be endanger'd by this hazard. For the Gospel teaches us to make very little reckoning of what is Temporal and Perishing, but to set the highest value on the Immortal Mind, whether it be our own or our Neighbour's. So that it can be nothing else but the regard I have to my own Soul and its preparation for Eternity, that can justly acquit me from what I ought otherwise to have to the Soul of the unjust Aggressor,

gressor, which is in the way to ruin, if to save my own Life, I take his in the midst of his Sin. And it ought to be remembered, that he is the Purchase of Christ's Blood, and therefore shou'd not be lost upon any Temporal Consideration; he is a Member of Christ tho' a corrupt one, and ought to be treated with tenderness. So that however valuable Life may be, they rate it too high who prefer it to the Soul of the vilest Person, or their greatest Enemy.

312. What then is *Self-Preservation*, that Fundamental Law of Nature, as some call it, to which all other Laws, Divine as well as Human, are made to do Homage? and how shall it be provided for? Very well; for it does not consist in the Preservation of the Person or *Composite*, but in preserving the Mind from Evil, the Mind which is truly the Self, and which ought to be secur'd at all hazards. It is this *Self-Preservation* and no other, that is a *Fundamental Sacred and Unalterable Law*, as might easily be prov'd were this a proper place; which Law he obeys, and he only, who will do or suffer any thing rather than Sin.

No Man having a power to deliver up this *Preservation*, or consequently the means of it, to the absolute Will and arbitrary Dominion

Two Treatises of Government, B. 2. S. 149.

of another, but has always a Right to Preserve what he has not a Power to part with, as a certain Author says in another Case where it will not hold.

313. Yet Life is to be Preserv'd where innocently it may, nor shou'd we dare to quit the Post in which our Sovereign Lord has plac'd us, till He is pleas'd to call us off. Self-Murder, that Heroick Action with the Heathens, being indeed neither Vertue nor Courage, but a want of Spirit to bear up against the Miseries of Human Life, and therefore thro' Cowardice they fled for Relief they knew not where. On the other hand, 'tis want of Judgment, or want of Heart, to be solicitous for Life, for the bare sake of Living. But to receive Death, or Life with all it's Miseries, with an equal Mind as GOD sees fit to dispense them, and in submission to His Will, is true Christian Fortitude. So that they are much mistaken who fanſie we wou'd part with Life unnecessarily, only because we talk of it with indifferency; we do not value it the less, but the more, for being ready to quit it when GOD requires it, for nothing but what is Valuable ought to be Sacrific'd to Him. But the current of the World running so strongly to a mistaken love and fondness for Life, one

one may reasonably use a vigorous expression, to divert it to a better course.

314. Life then must be preserv'd till GOD calls for it; and He calls for it, when by being laid down to bear Witness to Truth, to give Example of Patience, Constancy, and other Vertues, it can Glorifie His Name, and Edifie His Church. St. John * argues from Christ's laying down His Life for us, to the necessity of our laying down our Lives for the Brethren. And the rest of the Apostles † thought it became them and every other Member, to Imitate the Sufferings of the Head, and to be in this as well as in other respects conformable to Him, whenever they were so happy as to be call'd to it. For this is indeed the truest Kindness to our Selves, Our short Affliction for Christ's Sake, which is but for a Moment, working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory.

See Matt.

10, 38,

Ec.

and the

Parallel

Texts.

Also Mat.

16, 24.

Ec.

Joh. 15, 20.

2 Tim 2.

10, Ec.

Also chap.

4. 6.

* 1 S John

3. 16.

† 1 S. Pet.

2. 19, Ec.

Also Chap.

3. 14.

and 4. 1,

12, Ec.

S. James 1.

12.

2 Cor. 4.

10, 11, 17.

Rom. 8.

18.

315. Next to Life Reputation is prefer'd, and wou'd take place in all generous Minds, were Life at their disposal, It may be take in general for the Approbation and Praise of those among whom we live; and Fame is nothing else but a louder and more extended Reputation. But since Reputation may

be over, as well as undervalu'd; since Mankind neither are, nor ever will be all of a Mind; we ought to know with what part of them our Good Name is lodg'd, and how far their good Word is to be fought and valu'd; least in reality we lose our Reputation, or what is better, by a foolish and improper way of preserving it. The Judgment of GOD is without controverſie the only true measure of what is praise-worthy or blameable, and a Reputation not conformable to GOD's Judgment is not Honourable, or whatever it be it is not valuable. Thus we find the Praise of Men oppos'd to the Praise of GOD in Holy Scripture; tho' 'tis certain that a good Christian may lawfully receive, nay, he is in Conscience oblig'd to provide for it. But if Men are dispos'd to Praise what GOD Condemns, in this case there is not any thing more pernicious, nor more to be avoided than such applause.

316. And therefore since we must
 (a) Titus 2. 15. Live so that no Man may despise (a) us;
 (b) Rom. 12. 17. must provide things Honest or Honourable
 (c) 2 Cor. 6. 3. in the sight of all (b) Men; must give no
 and 1 Cor. 10 32. offence in any thing, (c) neither to the Jew
 nor Gentile, nor to the Church of GOD;
 must cut off occasion of censure and evil
 speaking, from them that desire and seek

occasion (d); and whatsoever things are (d) 2 Cor.
lovely and of good Report, if there be any 11. 12.
Vertue, any Praise must think on these (e) (e) Phil. 4;
things; since our Lord commands us to 8.
Let our Light so shine before Men, that (f) Matth.
they may see our good Works, and Glorifie 5. 16.
our Father which is in Heaven; and yet
we must not be desirous of (g) Vain-glory, (g) Gal. 5.
nor seek Glory of (h) Men, nor do our 26.
Works like the Pharisees to be seen of (i) (h) 1 Thess.
Men, unless we mean to lose all (k) Re- (i) Matth.
ward from our Heavenly Father, and to 23. 5, 6.
incur the woes denounc'd against such (k) Matth.
Hypocrisie; and therefore St. Paul tells 6. 1.
us, That he thought it a very small thing
to be Judg'd of Man's (l) Judgment; and (l) 1 Cor.
our Lord Himself imputes the Unbelief 4. 3.
of the Jews to their (m) receiving Honour (m) John
one of another, and not seeking the Honour 5. 44.
that comes from GOD; since all GOD's
Commands are consistent, and the Scrip-
ture reconcilable to it self, it is evident,
That tho' by keeping Consciences void of
offence towards GOD and towards (n) Men; (n) Acts
by abstaining from the very appearance of 24. 16.
(o) Evil, and doing nothing but what is of (o) 1 Thess.
good (p) Report, so far as it is in our 5. 22.
power, and as we can without omitting (p) Phil.
any necessary or greater Duty; we are 4. 8.
to preserve our selves blameless (q) as (q) Phil.
well as harmless, the Children of GOD 2. 15.
without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and
perverse

perverse Nation, among whom we are to shine as Lights in the World, and by this means to commend our selves to every Man's (r) 2 Cor. *Conscience in the sight of* (r) G O D; yet 4. 2. *we must not desire the Praise of Men for itself, or for our own Exaltation, nor seek it on any other account than as it is a means to Glorifie GOD and to Edifie our Neighbour; and hereby to procure to our selves the Honour that comes from GOD, the Searcher of Hearts and Rewarder of every one according to his Works.*

317. But if after all this care to gain the Esteem and Approbation of Men to our Selves, and to excite their Thankfulness to GOD for His Grace in us, if any or all of them are so Unjust and Wicked, as not to discern the Gifts and Graces of G O D, and bless Him for them; or if they enviously conceal the Esteem they have at Heart; if they will give no *Praise* without receiving it from us by Prov. 28. *our forsaking the Law, and becoming* 4. *Partners with them in their Wickedness; if we can neither get nor keep their Good-word, but by Sinful, Servile, and Unreasonable Compliances; we must not be so foolish and so unkind* John 12. *to our selves, as to love the Praise of Men* 43. *more than the Praise of G O D. For Applause so unjustly acquir'd, will neither be of use to others nor to our selves,*
bating

bating a present turn, and much less can it Glorifie GOD, whose Service is never promoted by Evil Methods. And indeed, by approving our selves to Him we are most like to preserve our Character with the Wise and Good, who are the true Dispensers of Reputation; which does not receive its value from the numbers, but from the worth of them who Praise. The Multitude being almost ever in the wrong, so that those who have the loudest Fame, have seldom, at least not in a Christian sense, the best.

318. However, *tho' all who see us shou'd Laugh us to (s) Scorn, tho' we shou'd be a (s) Psal. Reproach of Men, and Despised of the Peo- 22. 6, 7. ple, as was the Author and Finisher of our (t) Faith, yet like Him we must endure (t) Heb. this Cross, despising the Shame, and by 12. 2. patient continuance in well-doing seek for Glory, Honour, and (u) Immortality. For (u) Rom. so is the Will of GOD, that with Well-do- 2. 7. ing, and with this only, we shou'd put to silence the Ignorance of Foolish (w) Men. (w) 1 Pet. And if we take any other method be- 2. 15. sides this to Please Men, we shall not Gal. 1. 10. be able to approve our selves the Servants 1 Thess. 2. 4. of Christ.*

319. After what has been said of Reputation, one needs not be told what End is to be propos'd in seeking it, how it

is to be Valu'd and Preserv'd, and how to be Us'd. Glory is a Reward, and as such not due to Sinners till GOD shall purifie us, and crown His Own Work in us. So that if there be any sense and meaning in what Men say when they Commend us, 'tis only this, That the Gifts and Graces of GOD being manifested in us, He is to be Glorify'd, and we are to be Encourag'd in the good use we make of them. Our Masters Talents must be employ'd for His Service, to whom all Glory is due; and to make this be remembred, we have upon Record a Dreadful and Exemplary Punishment, inflicted on him who *gave not GOD the Glory* of his Eloquence. But we may lawfully be GOD's Stewards, or Receivers of the encrease of those Talents committed to our Trust, provided we transfer the Gain to the Rightful Owner. Thus did St. Paul, *I labour'd more abundantly*, said he, *than all the Apostles, yet not I, but the Grace of GOD which was with me.*

Acts 12.
31, &c.

1 Cor. 15.
10.

320. As for the value of Reputation, it best appears by the Care that GOD Himself commands us to take to obtain and to preserve it. He promises it as a Blessing, and proposes it as a Reward to the Just, whilst the Wicked are threatened with the want of it. We are told

in

in Scripture, That it is preferable to *great* Prov. 22.
Riches; and that of all Perfumes a Good 1.
Name is the most Precious, for it spreads Eccles. 7.
it's Odor far and near, our own Hearts
are chear'd, and our Spirits refresh'd by
it, and so are our Neighbours, who are
encourag'd to labour after that which
procures so great a Pleasure to all Inge-
nuous Minds. To be lavish of it un-
necessarily, is a dishonour to GOD as
well as to our Selves; nor do they va-
lue their Innocence and Vertue as they
ought, who do not by all fair and law-
ful ways secure a good Reputation. Not
to be sensible of it argues a Mean and
Base Spirit; Women especially ought to
have the nicest Sense of Honour. For
Men have twenty ways of retrieving
their Characters, whereas if ours is once
sullied by any sort of Folly, by the Ap-
pearance, or suspicion of it, there's no
way to recover its first Lustre, but tho'
we may have preserv'd our Innocence,
our Reputation is lost for ever, and all
the good might have been done by it.
And therefore tho' the Holy Apostle
does in general advise us to prefer that
State of Life which in *his Judgment*, who 1 Cor. 7.
had the Spirit of GOD, is the more come- 34. &c.
ly, *best* in it self, as being freest from the
distractions of this present Life, and more
devoted to the Service of GOD, and in
all

all respects the *Happier* State; yet he commands us to abate of this Perfection, and to condescend to a less excellent way, rather than give *occasion to the Adversary to speak reproachfully.*

1 Tim. 5.
14.

321. But alas! how unequal is our Conduct! We are humble and unambitious in some cases where we ought not to be so, and therefore are indeed not humble but base; and upon other occasions our vanity has no bounds. We value our Reputations, or more properly our Vanity, so much sometimes as to sacrifice even our Innocence to it, never regarding how many Unjust, Uncharitable, and Malicious things we do or say upon a mistaken point of Honour. At other times we easily give it up to our Humour and Folly; we have no regard to the opinion of the World in cases where we ought to prefer it to our own, it governs us only where it ought not to be consider'd. For instance, tell a Woman of improving her Talent, of being eminently Wise and Good in her Generation, of doing such things as GOD Approves, and which ought to have the Approbation of Mankind, whether or no they obtain it, she is the poorest, humble, unpretending thing! alas she has no Ambition! she's afraid of Censure, and dares not cross the

the vogue of the World, nor by doing what is unfashionable, hazard her Character tho' to improve it! But if she takes a fancy to play the Fool ever so notoriously; to put her self in the power of she knows not who; to do what all the World, but those mercenary Spirits who get by't, condemns; to fall under the Pity of the Wise and Good, and the Contempt and Laughter of those whom she most despis'd; why in this case who so stout and so exalted as she is! She has no Caution, no Fear, she tramples upon your best and kindest Advice, and hates you for it. She is got above Censure in a trice, and is carry'd away in her own lofty Thoughts one knows not where, but to a Fools Paradise you may be sure!

322. The best and the only way to get a Reputation worth having, is to do such things as deserve it. For Perfumes can't be conceal'd, and if we have light it will shine forth and discover it self, in spite of the Malice of GOD's Enemies and ours, provided it is *burning* like St. *John Baptist's*, bright and flagrant; but your twinkling and half-lighted Tapers are soon extinguish'd. It is but by accident and the evil Dispositions of Mankind, that Vertue is not follow'd with Praise; for being Beautiful

ful in it self, and Beneficial to the World, Reputation is it's Natural Effect. But sometimes our Lives are too much clouded, they do not shine enough; and sometimes they are too bright and dazzling; in the first case we do not deserve, in the latter the Envy of Men won't allow us Reputation. Nothing so Lovely nor consequently so Reputable, as a Life that's all of a Piece; the same even Thread running thro' it from the beginning to the end. When our Words correspond with our Thoughts and our Actions with both, and all these with each other; so that we are entirely consistent with our selves, and with the Precepts of the Gospel which never interfere. Nor is there any thing sinks our Reputation more, or renders us more despicable than an unsteady Conduct, which to day wou'd represent us Saints, and to morrow shews us to be no little Sinners, zealous for some Precepts, and scandalously loose in others. For what can this be but Hypocrisie, that most abominable Sin! and a concealing some Secular design under the veil of Religion? which brings more disreputation on our selves when it is discover'd, as it generally is, and even upon Religion, than open Prophaneness.

323. And as an Uniform Vertue does naturally produce Esteem, so more especially if among it's circle of Graces, any of those which have a peculiar aptness to attract Commendation, shine forth with a particular lustre. Such is Simplicity of Manners in the first place, and thus St. Paul opposes *the hidden things of Dishonesty*, 2 Cor. 4. *and walking in Craftiness*, to the commending ^{2.} *our selves to every Man's Conscience in the sight of GOD*. For the good opinion Men have of their own Understandings tho' it inclines them to use Artifices and Disguise themselves, gives them a great Abhorrence of it in others, as supposing it put on to over-reach them, which they cannot bear. And the reason why there is so much profess'd Sincerity, and so little in effect, is because every one is sensible that they loose all credit with their Neighbour when he suspects them of Falshood and Doubling. And one finds by the conduct of your Cunning People, that the greatest of all Artifices is to appear open and plain when they are not so.

324. Try them then before you Trust them, and particularly by Disinterestedness, for they wou'd not be at the pains to act Artificially but that they have their Aims, which is something in this World, since the interests of the next are not serv'd by such Methods, nor wou'd Men give them-

themselves the trouble on this account. There may be other Designs besides getting of Money, however this is call'd being Interessed, because Money generally purchases every other thing except Wisdom and Vertue, and he who has it seldom finds his want of these. It can't be deny'd, but that in Mens reckoning, Riches stand for all other good Qualities, and the Rich Man shall be cry'd up and follow'd more than any body, but I cannot say he shall be more Esteem'd; because when the Carcass is devour'd the Vultures leave him. And because a contempt of Money sets us above many dirty Temptations, and is an uncommon Vertue, few things give a clearer or more lasting Fame. This the *Stoicks* were sensible of, whose Vain-glory was their predominant Passion, and therefore they despis'd Riches in their Words and Writings tho' they had their Hundred Thousands out at Use.

325. Yet Money rightly us'd may procure Esteem, and if it is neither penuriously hoarded, nor lavish'd out profusely, but bestow'd generously. For Liberality is a beautiful quality, but it does not consist in squandering Wealth about without distinction of Things or Persons, and in wasting it in Vanity and Luxury: But in laying it out on worthy

worthy Designs and worthy Persons, with a free and plentiful hand, and in a handsome and engaging manner. The same reason for which Men love Money, disposes them to speak well of him who gives them what they love; and yet all People don't gain a Reputation by Giving, at least not among those who judge rightly. And the reason is, because they plainly shew, that they do not *do a Benefit*, which is something done for the sake of the Receiver, but they *make a Bargain* for their own sakes, they wou'd purchase one's Liberty, Honour, or Conscience. In which case he with whom they Traffick thinks he has a right to be upon his guard, and so perhaps may disappoint them of their purchase, nor can I see where that Ingratitude lies against which they so much exclaim. It is indeed a hopeless undertaking to oblige him with Money who despises it; if the way and manner of Giving be such as expresse the Judgment and Kindness of the Giver, he accepts it for the Givers sake, otherwise he disdains the Gift.

326. Good-nature truly so call'd, not that foolish easiness which makes us mere Properties, without any Rule or Judgment of our own, and carry'd on by such as our Company, or any assuming Person

Person has the assurance to impose: But Good-nature, or rather Christian Charity grafted on the stock of a sweet, obliging, affable Temper, which makes our Access easie and agreeable, suitable to our own Character and Station without offence to others, goes a great way towards Reputation. When neither our Fortune, Quality, or Wit sit hard on our Neighbours, but are employ'd to do them good, and we know how to preserve our own Dignity without shocking or lessening those who approach us. When we are free from selfish-narrowness, and also Humane and Compassionate to all who need our help, and offensive to none. This is to be the delight of Mankind, especially if a good Fashion and polite Address attend it. For Good-breeding is the ape of Good-nature and Charity, and since there is so little of the last among us, there wou'd be no living in the World, did not the former in some measure check the fierceness and brutality of Mankind, especially Men of Power. Now, tho' Charity and Good-nature are in effect and substantially, and excepting some Formalities, what Good-breeding is in appearance, yet because Out-side takes with the most, who are but superficial Judges, the greatest Merit and best Tem-

Temper are often dislik'd for want of that. As on the other side, when our Good-manners is upon trial found to be no more than a Formality, People learn to use it so far as it will go, and know how to Repent the Cheat it has put upon them.

327. But tho' our Actions are Innocent, or even Useful, if they are not suitable to our Persons and Character, they loose their Beauty, they merit Blame and not Praise. It is not the quantity and oddness, but the fitness and proportion that renders things valuable; where this is wanting in the works of Nature we call them Monstrous; and Art is nothing else but a result of due proportions. When the Apostle commands us to think on such things as are *Lovely*, or becoming, he means this suitability if I am not mistaken. And those who have the Judgment to discern wherein it consists, and the felicity to express it, must needs shine in every Condition of Life. There are ways of getting Money very Lawful and Commendable in some People, that wou'd be highly disreputable in others. *Ephron* and *Abraham* understood themselves too well to barter for the Field of *Machpelah*, they treated each other like Men of Quality. But churlish *Nabal* who knew not what was fit, too late

Gen. 23

1 Sam. 25

Y

repented

repented of his Folly. And as some sorts of Marriages are not Honourable, but must be condemn'd for several good Reasons, so they are particularly Scandalous and of Ill-Report because of the Indecency, the Woman being suppos'd to make the Address.

328. Humility and Modesty do also help to gain Reputation, for they are decent and amiable Vertues. A Great Mind which is not opposite to Humility but to its Counterfeit, and which is the only Soil wherein true Humility thrives, has so large a view and so lofty an aim, that when it has done its utmost, and what every one does or ought to value, that Idea of Excellency and Perfection which it always keeps in view, so far exceeds its Performances, that it is rather mortify'd thro' consideration of what it wants, than exalted with any attainment. It still presses forward looking upon the most excellent Patterns, and can't be so mean as to compare it self with any who are beneath it. And being most sensible of its own defects, and very diligent in the cure of them, it is not at leisure to observe its Neighbours. It endeavours to deserve well, and takes for granted that others do, till they give it demonstration to the contrary, and then its Love to Vertue makes it Pity, not Insult, those

those who have lost their Glory. And to make the best use of this Melancholy Subject, it turns its thoughts to the Apostles Advice, *Be not high-minded but Fear, considering thy self least thou also be Tempted.* If it despises any thing, it is those evil Arts which under the specious name of Humility and Kindness, are us'd to stop its progress in well-doing. And tho' it is too modest to prescribe to others, to pry into their Actions, or to worry them with its Importunities, yet it is sufficiently resolute to guard its self; Nor will it be so tame as to deliver up either its Vertue or its Judgment, to every bold Imposer. So exactly well does Magnanimity agree with Humility and Modesty, so Reputable, and so Lovely are they; but their Apes, and their Opposites are most contemptible.

329. I say nothing of Public-Spiritedness, for besides that we have almost lost the very Notion of this Vertue, it being too certain that Men have Projects for themselves a-foot, when they cry out for the Public; and the Public is Ruin'd under pretence of Serving it; besides this, the Sphere allotted to us Women who are Subjects, allows us no room to Serve our Country either with our Counsel or our Lives. We have no Authority to Preach Vertue, or to Punish Vice. As

we have not the Guilt of Establishing Iniquity by Law, so neither can we Execute Judgment and Justice. And since we are not allow'd a share in the Honourable Offices in the Commonwealth, we ought to be asham'd and scorn to drudge, in the mean Trade of Faction and Sedition.

330. Some good Actions are Private in their own Nature, and some are so by the Command of Christ, so that to Publish them does not make for our Reputation but Disgrace. The reason of things requires that a Benefit shou'd be conceal'd by the Doer, and Publish'd by the Receiver; for he who *proclaims his own Goodness or Bounty* as the Margin reads, (and who is oppos'd by the Wise King to *a Faithful Man*, or a Friend) pays himself, and has no title to the Gratitude of him who receiv'd it, nor to the Esteem of other Men. And therefore to *let another Man Praise thee and not thy own Mouth, a stranger and not thy own Lips*, is in no case more necessary than in this. Our Lord has particularly commanded us to conceal our *Prayers, Fasts, and Alms* from the Eyes of Men, lest we shou'd be as the *Hypocrites*, and lose the *Reward of our Father who is in Heaven*; and the Divine Authority of the Law-giver is the best and most undeniable

Prov. 20.
6.

Prov. 27.
2.

Matth. 6.

able Reason of His Laws. But since He condescends to give us leave to enquire further, we may with all Humility presume, that Prayer and Fasting being Transactions between GOD and our own Souls, and such as do no Benefit to Mankind, nor are of any use unless they are sincere, which none but GOD alone can know; being also easily counterfeited, and apt to attract the Eyes of the Common Sort, as instances of great Religion, for which reason they do it the greatest injury when they are discover'd to be but Counterfeits: Therefore our Lord who knows our Frailty, to remove these Stumbling-blocks out of our way, requires our Light to shine forth in instances not so easily dissembled, and which whether Sincere or no, may be useful to Mankind. Alms indeed are of this Nature, and therefore it is for some other reason, which shall be accounted for in its proper place, that our Lord enjoyns us to do them with so great secrecy, that if it were possible we our selves shou'd not be witnesses of our own Charity.

331. In the mean time we may observe, That the true Christian seeks a Reputation from Vertues of a Public, not of a Private Nature. Ones Circumstances it is confess'd may be such, as

that they can't distribute their Alms with their own hands, nor conceal themselves from the Receiver: The Family will know of their Fasts, and others suspect them of Devotion in their Retirements. But provided these Duties are not neglected, the less occasion is given for Observation, and the more Industrious, but not with an *affected* Industry, they are conceal'd, they are so much the more excellent. And whenever they shall break out, as 'tis like they may even in this World, by the disposition of Divine Providence, GOD Himself taking care of our Honour, when we are only solicitous for His, they will be the more Exemplary, and shine with the brighter lustre.

332. But supposing they shou'd not be disclos'd till the great day of Recompence, there are opportunities enow for a Christian to *let his Light shine before Men*, in instances that can't be conceal'd from them, and in which if he does not behave himself Reputably, he brings a Reproach on his Christian Profession and Glorious Master, as well as on himself. For there is not any thing more injurious to Religion than to handle it with Treacherous, Rapacious, or Dirty Fingers. There are certain Virtues which don't much heighten any
ones

ones Character because they are expected from all, but it is a very great Infamy to neglect them, and so much the worse if he who offends against these common Duties, pretends to higher attainments. Many things pass without observation in common and unnoted People, which are scandalous in those who have a name for Wisdom and Vertue. Some Men's Employment makes that an Abomination in them, which in others is no more than the way of the World; and tho' he is a base Person who deceives and over-reaches any one, yet he is the basest Traytor who betrays where he is Intrusted, and has been Oblig'd. For those whose proper business it is to Guide us into the way of Truth, instead of this to lead and hurry us into the road of Perdition, is the most outrageous of all Villanies; and so much the worse by how much the better they pay themselves for doing it.

333. I know not how it comes not to be Infamous in a Christian Country to speak irreverently of G O D, of our Saviour, and the sacred Mysteries and Doctrines of our Holy Religion: But whether it be fashionable or no, it is for certain our Duty *not to be asham'd to confess the Faith of Christ Crucify'd* openly

to all the World. Our Holy Mother the Church requires this of us when she receives us into her Bosom, and 'tis like this is one of her principal faults with our Modern Wise Reformers ! But they may please to remember, that the Apostle tells us, That it is not enough to *believe with the Heart*, unless *Confession be made with the Mouth*; for our *Faith* shou'd be spoken of as that of the *Romans* was, *throughout the whole World*. Our Lord Himself having assur'd us, That if any one is *asham'd* of any Christian Doctrine or Practice in this *Adulterous and Sinful Generation*, of him shall the Son of Man be *asham'd* when He cometh in the Glory of His Father with the Holy Angels.

Rom. 10.
10.

Rom. 1. 8.

Mark 8.
38.

334. All the World shou'd be Witnesses of our exact and nice Justice and generous Disinterestedness; shou'd know so well our contempt of Money, as to blush more to offer us a Bribe or any Clandestine Gain, than most People do to receive it. Moderation and a Temperate use of Prosperity shou'd appear to all, tho' Fasting and Mortification must not. Our Alms must be secret in regard to the Modesty of Human Nature, and least we shou'd encrease our Brothers Affliction by exposing it: But when the necessity of GOD's Church calls for Public Charities, our Zeal shou'd be

be such *as to provoke* others. And we ought to be as regular and open in our Publick Devotions, as our Private ought to be stollen and conceal'd. Our Veracity and Faithfulness shou'd be so remarkable, that they may be as securely depended on, as the strongest Bonds and most solemn Obligations. Our Purity and Loyalty of all kinds must be unspotted, and free from the least suspicion; they have lost their lustre if they come to be attack'd, for their Brightness ought to confound the Presumptuous, and keep Temptation at an awful distance.

335. Restitution and Penitence are Public Vertues, he who has been so unhappy as to do wrong, and to give scandal, must not be less open in his Repentance than he has been in his Sin. For it is not enough to Sin no more, without making reparation for the Injury and Scandal; and if the heart is truly Contrite, and desirous to be rid of its Guilt, it will not scruple to give Glory to GOD, and to take Shame to it self, as a due Punishment for its Transgressions. In which case, wherever these are mention'd, the Repentance attending them will also be remembered for an Atonement and Memorial. Whereas People who are so
tender

tender as to suffer nothing, may be weary of their Sin perhaps, or want opportunity to commit it, but they give the World no evidence that they abhor it. When our Sins have been great and notorious, the most profound Abjection and Lowliness of Mind becomes us.

Isai. 43. 3. For it is the being *precious in GOD's*
4. *Sight* that makes us *Honourable*, if we
Tit. 1. 15, have unhappily made our selves *abomi-*
26: *nable* in His Eyes, we ought to be abundantly more so in our own; for in this
Prov. 15. case especially, *before Honour is Humi-*
33. *lity.*

336. We may be very Exemplary in the discharge of our Duties to our several Relations, and whatever our Employment or Circumstances are, it is in our power to make them shine by filling our Sphere. Christians ought to have no Enemies, that is, They ought to give no occasion or just pretence to any ones Enmity: But if People will hate and persecute us without a cause, every one who knows of their Malice, shou'd also be acquainted with our readiness to Forgive, and our Charity towards them. For whoever resolves to live a Christian Life, will meet with provocations more than enow, to give continual exercise to his Meekness and Long-suffering. And the Calamities of Life are so many,
that

that our Patient Resignation, and Chearful Submission to the Will of GOD, and our Fortitude in bearing Afflictions without Murmuring or Complaint, may be very conspicuous.

337. But if we are *reproach'd, for the Name of Christ, and Persecuted for Righteousness sake, Happy are we, for the Spirit of Glory and of GOD resteth upon us.*

1 S. Pet.
4. 14, &c.
Matth. 5,
10, 11.

The noble Army of Martyrs obtain'd a lasting Fame in this World, as well as one of the brightest Crowns in the next, by laying down their Lives for the Glory of GOD, and the Edification of His Church, and to bear Witness to the Truth among Unbelievers.

Let none of you suffer as an Evil doer, says the Apostle, or as a busie body in other Mens matters, that is, as a Factious, Seditious, or Rebellious Person; but if any Man suffer as a Christian let him not be asham'd, but let him Glorifie GOD on this behalf. It being the highest Honour a Christian can attain, to lay down his Life rather than break any of GOD's Commands, among which the being *Subject* to, and the not *Resisting* the Lawful Power that GOD has set over us, is none of the least.

Rom. 13.

338. In a word, a Christian endeavour to obtain a Good Reputation is distinguish'd

distinguish'd from Vain-glory, by the *motive*, which in the former is Obedience to GOD, in the latter the mere pleasing of our Selves; by the *method* which is only good and upright Actions in the one, and in the other any Arts and Ways that will take with Men; by the *Value* set upon our Reputation, the Vain-glorious preferring it before a good Conscience, to which the Christian makes it always give place; by the *End* propos'd, and the *Use* that is made of it, the Vain Man seeking nothing but his own Exaltation and Temporal Interests; whilst the Christian proposes only the Honour of GOD at present, expecting hereafter that Real Glory which GOD will bestow upon all His Faithful Servants. For Praise consider'd in it self, and separate from its Use, is but a Vain thing; because GOD alone knows the Heart, and therefore He only can pronounce concerning the Merit of an Action. And further, since every good and perfect Gift is from above, since the Use of it is ours, but not the Property, all Praise that is not chiefly and ultimately referr'd to GOD must needs be Vain.

339. As for the Use of Reputation, it powerfully restrains us from Evil, and encourages us in Well-doing, encreasing
our

our future Reward by the Good it enables us to do to others. For by shewing them that Vertue is Practicable, and that no more is requir'd of them than what has been done before, by those of like Infirmities, it excites the Generous Mind, and renders the Slothful and Wicked without excuse. And by raising the Admiration of Mankind, and working a Veneration in their Hearts, it disposes them to attend to what we Say and Do, and to be perswaded by it. And therefore upon this account, *A good Name is rather to be chosen* Prov. 22. *than great Riches, and loving Favour rather than Silver and Gold;* because it gives us an Interest with those, whom Riches as powerful as they are, can't Influence.

340. For the Mind of Man however corrupt, perceives it to be just to Esteem and Praise Actions conformable to the Will of GOD, and that because for the most part, it finds its own account in them; Obedience to the Law of GOD tending to the Common Good, and therefore it is generally Reputable even among the worst of Men. It happens indeed sometimes, that a Holy Life, especially the most Generous and Heroic Acts of Holiness, disturbs them in their Sins, and upbraids them with their
their

their Iniquities, and for this reason procures their Ill-will. Thus we find that Vertues of the middle rank are most commended, but the greatest and most excellent are not understood, and are too frequently miscall'd by the names of Vice. And this happens sometimes thro' mere Ignorance, and sometime thro' the Malice of Men, who misrepresent Vertue that they may with the better grace decry it, few or none being so Impudent as to blame a Good Action as such.

341. Some Vertues and some Vices bear a great resemblance in the mere outward act, so that they are not to be distinguish'd but by the intention, the reason, and the end of the action. Thus he who lets his Light shine before Men in Obedience to GOD's Command, and he who does his Good Works only to be seen of Men, do the same thing as to outward Appearance, tho' the one only seeks a Good Report for his Masters Honour, and the other is Vain-glorious. He who firmly adheres to Truth, and he who will not be convinc'd of his Error, are equally fixt and immoveable, tho' the one is Virtuously Constant, and the other Viciously Obstinate. He who values Himself *only*, and despises his Fellow Creatures, is Proud; but he who Esteems Human Nature in
General

General and is sensible of the Dignity of a Christian, and values both himself and others for this Reason, has a truly Great and Generous Mind. Our Neighbour's Necessities are equally reliev'd, whether we give him Money with an intention to help him for G O D's sake, or meaning to buy him over to our Party; tho' the one is Charity, and the other Corruption. To refuse an obliging compliance with our reputed Benefactors, to contradict their will, and oppose their measures, passes for Ingratitude, and is really so when their desires are just and reasonable, or even innocent and indifferent; and if we make unkind and evil returns to the good they endeavour to do to our Minds, this is the vilest Ingratitude. But if they expect submission right or wrong, if they wou'd have us stifle, or act contrary to the sentiments of a well inform'd Judgment, and expect a tame compliance where Honour and Conscience oblige us to oppose them, in this case opposition is Integrity. There is a Zeal that is set on Fire of Hell, and a Zeal according to Knowledge, and it is not so much the warmth of the pursuit, as the Goodness and Consequence of the Matter, and the regular Methods of pursuing it, that gives the distinction.

342. And

342. And therefore, since we can't demonstrate the goodness of our Actions, since we can only make it Probable, because we don't view each others Hearts, and in all Probable Truths there is something to be offer'd on the other side; since few Mens Judgments as they manage them', are so correct as to distinguish nicely between Good and Evil, Praise-worthy and Blameable; few judge rightly for themselves much less for their Neighbour, whose Principles and Circumstances they know but in part, and whose heart they can't penetrate; and since a failure in any Circumstance spoils the Goodness and Beauty of the Action; when Men are dispos'd to decry what is not for their turn, and can find People to spread, or countenance, or listen to their Calumnies, and such are seldom wanting, 'tis no hard matter to give the best Action an ill Representation. Either the Motives are not Good, the Circumstances faulty, the End is not the best, or the Method improper, or if all other detractions fail, the Intention which they know nothing of, shall be suspected and arraign'd, nay the very Consequences and Event which no Human Wisdom or Power can provide for, shall be objected. And by such Wise Reasonings! the
very

very worst Actions when they succeed are generally applauded, and the best Designs decry'd when they are unsuccessful.

343. I am next to consider what regard is due to our Bodies, which some of us are so concern'd about as if they were our All. And yet we seem to forget their greatest Excellency, which is the being *Members of Christ*, and *Temples of His Holy Spirit*. Upon this account, and this only we ought to Reverence them, it being Sacrilegious to Desecrate what is *Holy*, and what was devoted to GOD's Service at our Baptism. And the Punishment of such a Profanation is proportionable to the Guilt, for *he who defiles a Temple, shall GOD destroy*. All the Works of our Great Creator are in Number, Weight, and Measure, and therefore without controverſie, it is for very good Reasons that He has ſo united a Corruptible Body to an Immortal Mind, that the impressions which are made on the former, ſhall be perceiv'd and attended with certain Sensations in the other, and this by ways altogether myſterious and incomprehenſible, and only to be reſolv'd into the Efficacy of the Divine Will. The Body then may be of great Service to us, if we know how to em-

2 Cor. 6.
16, 17.

1 Cor. 3.
16, 17.

Z

ploy

Rom. 12.
1.

ploy it according to the design of our Maker. And not to enquire what our Bodies wou'd have been, had we preserv'd our Innocence, the Restorer of our Nature has shewn us, that they are capable of Glorifying GOD by being offer'd up *a living Sacrifice, Holy and acceptable to Him, which is our Reasonable Service.* The meaning of which is, that whereas under the former Oeconomies Beasts were Slain and Offer'd on GOD's Altar; under the Christian, the Appetites arising from the Union of the Body with the Mind, are to be Sacrific'd all the days of our Life, than which there is not any thing more Reasonable.

Rom. 8
13.
and 6. 6.

344. For it is evident from many Texts of Holy Scripture, which command us to *Mortifie the Body*, to be *dead* to it, and to be *Crucified with Christ*, if we desire to *Live with Him*, that the Life of a Christian is a Life of Sobriety and Severity, in opposition to Voluptuousness and the Pleasures of Sense, to which we are so prone by the corrupt Nature we bring into the World with us, and yet more by the Evil Manners and Customs we learn in it. And therefore upon our admission into the Church of Christ, we are requir'd and strictly engag'd, to renounce all these, as much

as the Necessities of Life permit. And that this is highly Reasonable is also evident, not only by reason of GOD's Sovereignty, who may set His Servants and Creatures what Task He pleases; but also because this present Life is but a State of Probation, and a very short passage to Eternity, and GOD only knows what dispositions are necessary to qualify and prepare us for that Kingdom and Bliss He has provided for us; Nor is there any manner of proportion between the short Work enjoyn'd, and the endless Reward with which it is His good Pleasure to recompence our Honest Endeavours.

345. The *Mortification* of a Christian is not a transient Act, it is a living above the Pleasures of Sense, and the low concerns of the Body. And it is not to be wonder'd that our Holy Religion requires this, for even Reason will inform us, That an All-wise GOD cou'd never design an Immortal Mind so contemptible an Employment, as the busying it self about a Corruptible Body. Nor is the subjecting of the Body to the Mind in reality a Pain; on the contrary it is a Pleasure, as being most agreeable to the Nature and Reason of Things. But it is call'd Mortification, because most of us being Edu-

cated in a Sensual Life, it becomes painful to deny our indulg'd desires, and to reduce them to Reason, and the doing of this is all the difficulty of a Christian Life. A Life that abounds with Pleasure, and has no Pain, but what is accidental, arising from our indisposition and the ill habits we have needlessly contracted, or else from the malice of Men, who are resolv'd that *all who will Live Godly in CHRIST JESUS shall suffer Persecution.*

346. To live a *Sensual Life*, by which I mean an indulgence to the innocent Pleasures of Sense as we call them, as well as those gross Liberties and Intemperances of any kind, which every one owns to be Sins, is to be *alienated from the Life of GOD*; for if Sense has dominion over us, 'tis no great difference after what manner, or to which of our Senses we are enslav'd. And it is very remarkable, that the Rich Man of whom we have so terrible an account in the Gospel, is not blam'd for any Notorious Sin. We don't read that he got his Estate by Fraud or Injustice, or that he was a Drunkard, a Glutton, or an Unclean Person. He only *Liv'd well*, and indulg'd himself in the free use of such Sensible Pleasures as a great Fortune afforded. And as a natural consequence of this, being well and at ease, he

Luke 16.

he look'd no further than himself, and had no regard to his indigent Brother. But tho' the Gospel condemns such a Life as this, yet the Life of a Christian is not less a Life of Pleasure in reality, and in a true Sense. For our Creator is too good to give us Appetites and Desires merely to torture us, and having planted in our Nature a desire of Pleasure, He designs without doubt to satisfy it. But then having given us Reason and Liberty, and set before us great variety of Pleasures, He expects we shou'd chuse the best; and by forbearing the other, exercise our Vertue and so prepare our selves in this short time of Trial, for Pleasures Infinite and Eternal.

347. As for Bodily Austerities, I neither commend nor blame them, *let every one do as he is perswaded in his own Mind.* The Apostle tells us, That they profit a little, but that *Godliness is profitable unto all things*; that is, a Christian disposition and temper of Mind is the business, to which all the Actions of our Lives must tend. If Austerities make us more Holy, Just and Good, let us use them in GOD's Name: but if we place our Religion chiefly in these, neglecting *the weightier matters*; if they render us supercilious and sour, opiniated and censorious, 'tis hard to say whether such a

Severity as this, or Indulgence to the Body is more pernicious, for both are contrary to the Spirit of Christianity. For to be rigid to others is an excess and disorder of Mind, and not less an Intemperance than to be indulgent to the Body; 'tis indeed an indulgence to our selves only in another instance. Nor does any thing bring a greater reproach upon a strict and regular Life, than that undue Liberty which some who pretend to it take, to censure and judge those who don't come up to their measures.

348. Yet Fasting is a Duty, for the Church enjoyns it, whose Injunctions are not superseded because they are too much neglected; and unless we have spoil'd our Constitution, Moderate Fasting and Abstinence is the most wholesome Physick, and on this account useful even to the Body. But if the Churches Authority is not sufficient, tho' she derives it from her Lord, we have that of our Lord Himself, who had not given directions about Fasting, if He had not judg'd it requisite and expedient. For tho' it is Superstition or weakness of Judgment, and not Reason, that prompts us to such a rigorous usage of the Body as to disable it from serving the Mind; yet Reason may use a discreet Authority

ty over it, if for no other cause, to preserve its Dominion, and to make the inferior Appetites pliable to the Mind. Such self-denials do also dispose us to Compassion, by making us feel sometimes what our poor Brother often suffers, and which we too seldom consider, unless it comes home to our selves. A day of Fasting is also a good opportunity for recollection, especially if we live in the hurry of the World; but I am at a loss to find how bare Fasting makes us more capable of Devotion. For they who Eat and Drink till they are unfit to Meditate and Pray, ought to be taught daily Temperance, rather than prescribed a Weekly or Monthly Fast.

349. And therefore, tho' I will not say my Neighbour Sins when he indulges the reputed innocent Pleasures of Sense, because I am not a Judge of his Circumstances and Necessities, and *to his own Master he stands or falls*, yet I may reasonably conclude, that such an indulgence were a Sin in me. As the Example of others does not authorize me to allow my self the Pleasures they take; so neither am I to blame them for taking those allowances I think fit to deny my self. Every one is best acquainted with his own Temper and Necessities, he

best knows what Pleasures refresh and what bewitch him; what gives him new vigor in the Works of his Calling and the Offices of Religion, and what engrosses his Thoughts and Time, making his Addresses to Heaven a mere verbal and tasteless employment. Unless he has spoil'd his relish, he is able to distinguish between a transient *goust*, a short commotion of the Passions, and striking of the Fancy, which goes off in weariness, trouble, or satiety; and those calm, but yet satisfying Joys which sweetly charm the Mind, leaving nothing, no uneasiness behind them, and which being review'd by the severest Reason, afford a new and lasting entertainment. In fine, he is best able to compute for himself the difference between a little momentary Pleasures, and such as are of an endless duration; and when this is done, a Reasonable Person I shou'd think, needs not be told where to fix, his very love of Pleasure is sufficient to determine him. For a Christian's Mortification is no hard task upon the main, 'tis only a little Physick to carry off his Distempers, an Exercise to strengthen his Constitution, and by this means to prepare him for the greatest Delights, such as never End, and always satisfy.

350. I conclude then, That we have at once most effectually mortify'd our Bodies, and also taken the most reasonable care of them, when they are reduc'd to be most obedient servants to the Mind; when we have brought them to stand in need of no great observance, but to be ready to accommodate themselves to all Conditions and Circumstances, so that they know how *to be full and to be hungry, to abound and to suffer need.* When they neither surfeit in Plenty, nor repine in Want, nor are disorder'd by either; but can thank GOD for both, correcting the former with Fear, and supplying the latter with Chearfulness. When they never call away the Mind from its proper Pleasures, to supply their imaginary Wants, or to humour their Appetites, but are healthy and satisfy'd with what Reason assigns them. And this I take to be the best way to keep the Body in good tune, to avoid Pain, and to be always Easie. I only fear there is too much *Epicurism* in it; for by living thus according to Nature, the simplest refreshments and such as are in almost every ones power, have a greater relish than the most study'd delicacies to an indulg'd and a disorder'd Appetite, that is always longing after what it has not,
and

and surfeiting with what it has. And further, tho' Acute Distempers arise from some real disorder in the Body or Machine, and therefore are not to be cur'd by mere Thinking, or so much as diverted when the Pain is violent, yet it must be confess'd, that our little uneasinesses and daily complaints, are mostly, if not always, in the Imagination only, so that to withdraw the Mind from these Fancies, and to Think *rightly*, is their proper cure. Or suppose they be not wholly in the Fancy, a diversion to those noble entertainments which are properly the Pleasures of the Mind, as arising from its peculiar objects, and not at all from sensation, wou'd take us off from attending to the little complaints of Sense, and by this means remove them.

351. Our *Estates* are another Talent which GOD has committed to our Trust, and our Duty in relation to these, is to be *Content* with what His Providence has allotted us, thankful for it, and careful to dispose of it for His Honour and Service. For the Goods of this World are indeed Advantages when *they are found in the way of Righteousness*. And he who possesses and uses them rightly, is to be highly esteem'd, because he gives evidence of an uncommon

mon Vertue, showing that he is not to be overcome by that which corrupts the most. But your Ladiship has so just a Sense of this, that I know you wou'd not forgive me if I did not add, That *whether he be Rich, Noble, or Poor, their Glory is the Fear of the Lord; and that a Mean Estate is not always to be contemn'd, nor the Rich that is Foolish to be had in admiration.*

352. Contentment is properly an acquiescence in our present condition without further desires, and in this sense its only object are the Goods of this present Life; for it wou'd be a Fault and not a Vertue to be content with the true Goods of the Mind, so as to sit down without any further desires after them. We shall it's true be content, if by this is meant *satisfy'd*, with our Portion in the Blessed Life to come, because every one will see that the distribution is most equitable, and will be so Reasonable himself as not to desire it shou'd be otherwise. But in this present state of improvement, I can hardly call it less than a Sin to be content with lower attainments when we are invited and encourag'd, nay even commanded to come up higher. And when we have made the most plausible apologies for this inglorious Sloth that it will bear, it can't
be

be excus'd from proceeding from an evil Principle. But tho' we are to be content in whatsoever State GOD has plac'd us in this World, without any uneasie desire of change, yet it is neither unlawful nor unseemly to encrease our Estate as well as other Talents, when it comes fairly in our way. When we can do it Honestly and Honourably, without putting our selves to much trouble and care, or neglecting a more important Business and better Improvements. Getting an Estate indeed is not a Womans business, and therefore for the most part she is free from the Solitude of *laying House to House, and Land to Land*, so uncomely in a Christian, who is but a *Stranger and Pilgrim upon Earth*, who *has no abiding City here, but who seeks one to come*: It were well if we knew how to keep and use what our Relations have provided for us, and did not put it out of our own power, into hands that feldom or never dispose of it as they ought.

See §. 173.
 § 208.
 Prov. 3.
 27, 28.

353. It has been already observ'd, That we are not Proprietors, but *Stewards of the manifold Gifts of GOD*, and of Riches among the rest; that our Poor Brother derives a Right from GOD the LORD of all, to what exceeds a reasonable provision for our Selves and Families,

Families, according to that Station which GOD has plac'd us in; And that this provision is to be estimated by the measures of the Gospel, by Right Reason, and the Judgment of Prudent and Sober Persons, not by our suppos'd and imaginary occasions. I might also add, That Alms is the best way of improving our Estates, and is a laying of them out to our own greatest advantage; but there has so much been said upon this Subject by better Pens, that I need not further insist on it. I shall therefore only tell your Ladiship, what sort of distribution of our Money that is which I take to be Alms, and what not. For they who will not be perswaded to put their Money to this most secure and advantageous Use by the Precepts and Promises of the Holy Scripture, by the Present Pleasure and Profit as well as the Future, will never be prevail'd on by any thing that I can say.

Matth. 25.
1 Tim. 6.
17, &c.
Isai. 58.
Prov. 19.
17.
Psal. 41.
Heb. 13.
16.

354. A *Christian Almsgiving* is a secret and chearful distribution of our Goods to our Necessitous Neighbour, for GOD's sake, and with no other prospect but of a Reward from Him. They must be *our Goods*, we must have a just Title to them, and shou'd have discharg'd all our Obligations of Justice before we pretend to give Alms. Otherwise

wise we only make Restitution, or pay our Debts; or we give what's none of our own, and so are Unjust, or Oppressive, but are not Charitable. It must be *for GOD's sake*, for if it is for our own, and to appease the yernings of our Bowels, that Pain we can't help feeling when we see or hear of a Calamitous Person, it is *Compassion*: if it be for our Neighbour's sake, it is *Friendship*, or *Humanity*. We must propose no *Reward but what GOD's Promises offer us*. For if we give our Favours to gain the Affection of the Receiver 'tis *Liberality*, the very name of which Vertue shews, (by the way,) That a scanty and improper Gift where the desire of the Giver does not supply it by speaking his Kindness, has no claim to the reward of a Grateful Affection. If we lay out our Money to purchase a dependant we drive a Bargain, which is so much the better or worse, according to the use we make of it; but *still it is a Bargain*, and neither an *Alms* nor a *Benefit*. For the Scripture enjoyns him that *giveth to do it with Simplicity*, that is, with a pure Intention, and without any sinister ends and low designs. For if it is for Ostentation, or to receive the Praise of Men, this is *Vain-glory*, and this poor Praise is all the Recompence

pence we must expect. Since by proposing this we discharge GOD of the Debt, who otherwise has graciously condescended to make the Almfgiver His Creditor. Our Alms must also be done *in secret*, for GOD who *has made of* Acts 17.
one Blood all Nations of Men, and who 26.
is no respecter of Persons, having allow'd 12. 34.
 us Ability to Give, which is more Blessed 20. 35.
than to Receive; expects that we shou'd have some regard to our Afflicted Brother, and to the Modesty of Human Nature at least in Gratitude to Him. And that our poor Neighbours may not be despicable in our Eyes, as seeming to be neglected by Providence, GOD is pleas'd to shew an extraordinary regard Prov. 14.
 to them, to constitute them His own 31.
 Representatives, to reckon what we Matth. 25.
 do to them as done to Himself, and 25. 34. &c.
 has promis'd not only an ample Reward, Prov. 19:
 but even a peculiar Honour, to him 17.
 who relieves his Neighbour's Modesty as well as his Want. But to publish S. Matth.
 our Alms by any sort of Artifices, to 6. 1, &c.
 gaze upon his Miseries, and to lay them open to the bleak Air of an Ill-natur'd World, which is apt to reckon Poverty the greatest Crime, or to make him more Miserable by endeavouring to render him Mercenary, may be *Vanity*, *Pride*, or *Insolence*, or even *Cruelty*,
 but

but is not Christian Almsgiving. And this in the last place, must be a *Cheerful* distribution, which includes the readiness and plentifulness of the relief; so far as we are able. For a niggardly Alms rather upbraids our Neighbour's Necessities than relieves them; and if they come forc'd from us by importunity, he has paid a valuable consideration for them. *GOD loveth a secret and cheerful Giver*, and so do Men; and the most Compassionate JESUS who felt all our Innocent Infirmities, by that very strict charge He lays upon Christians in this matter, has provided for the relief of His poor Members without exposing them to the Insults of the Rich, or encreasing their Necessities by the pain of disclosing them needlessly.

2 Cor. 9.
7.

Matth. 6.

355. *Real Honour* is the same thing with Vertue, and even *Titular Honour* consider'd in it's self, I take to be a nobler Talent than Wealth. Because Riches may be acquir'd by Mean and Vile Methods, whereas Titular Honour ought, and therefore is suppos'd, to be the Reward of Real Honour or Vertue. And those who are born of Noble and Generous Parents, are presum'd to have the best Education, and to be fir'd to Great Actions by the Examples of their Predecessors. Honour by placing us on
higher

higher ground sets us more in view, and so renders our Light more conspicuous, and our Evil Example more pernicious; and we ought to remember, that as we are accountable for the Evil we do, so for the Good we omit. 'Tis a dangerous thing to be plac'd above others, unless our Heads are so steady as to discern, that the Cringes of the most are for their own sakes, that by seeming our Slaves, they may Flatter us into being theirs: And that the Respect and Observance of the Wise and Good, rests not in us but in GOD, whose Superiority is Honour'd in us. But Honour being a sort of Reputation, and to be acquir'd and us'd after the same manner, needs not be further insisted on.

356. The course of the World does not often lodge *Power and Authority* in Womens hands, tho' by the use is made of them, when Providence has plac'd them there, one may reasonably conclude, That as it does not shew the Justice, so neither is it for the Interest of Men to with-hold them. For besides that Glorious Example we have all in view, which is the delight of *English* Hearts, and on which the Eyes of all *Europe* are fixt with Admiration, we have many Ancient Precedents to shew how Power and Greatness ought to be,

A a

and

and how they *have* been us'd by Ladies. To go no farther than Holy Writ, the Character of *Deborah* is in my mind much greater than that of any of the Mighty Men who went before her. *Esther* employ'd her Interest, and even expos'd her Life with Heroic Fortitude for the Church of G O D, for she consider'd that He who defends it as the Apple of His Eye, wou'd cause *enlargement and deliverance to arise* some way or other, and if she *altogether held her peace at that time*, and slipt the opportunity of being the Glorious Instrument, she shou'd only deprive herself of that Honour and Reward which G O D design'd her, it being highly probable that she *was come to the Kingdom for such a time as this*.

Est. 4.

357. Among all our Talents there's not any more valuable than *Time*, nor can the other be improv'd if this is wasted. But we are all of us a contradiction to our selves in this particular, for we seem to have at once both too much and too little of it. The shortness of Life is a general Complaint, and yet those who complain the loudest, are the People in the World who are most at a loss to get rid of their Time, that is, their Life. Few have leisure as they tell us, to improve their Minds, and to prepare

prepare themselves for Heaven, they are cumber'd with many things, greater Affairs one wou'd think, because the other is deferr'd for their sakes. And yet these same People have twenty impertinent inventions to dispose of their Time, which wou'd otherwise be a burden to them. Diversion, or a relaxation of our Spirits, when we are wearied with any employment of Body or Mind, is very requisite. But what can be more ridiculous than for those to seek Diversion who have no Business, but are only weary of their Idleness? Business being the only proper Diversion for such as these. And indeed, were we as prudent managers as we ought to be, we might make one useful employment be a Diversion to another. For it is the dwelling long upon any one thing that tires us, and we find our selves as weary of our Sports as of our Business when we have been long about them. Variety gives the relief, and there is enough to be found among useful things, so that we need not fly to Impertinence.

358. *Conversation* is one way of passing off our Time, and were it what it shou'd be, a very Useful as well as Entertaining one. But alas! among all the Talk that is in the World, where

shall we find the Conversation? For the end of Speech is to communicate our Thoughts for mutual advantage; but where is he who speaks his Thoughts? or who Thinks so as to deserve Attention? The Jews were commanded to *talk* of GOD's Precepts *sitting in the House, and walking by the way, when they lay down, and when they rose up*; and particularly of that great Commandment, *Thou shalt Love the LORD thy GOD with all thine Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Might*. But we who are call'd Christians, to whom *Life and Immortality is brought to Light by the Gospel*; we who are to *have our Conversation in Heaven*, we who have been told by our Judge,

Matth. 12. That we must give account for every idle
36, 37. word at the day of Judgment, and according to the Apostle, those are Idle
Ephes. 4. Words, or Corrupt Communications which
29. do not tend to Edifying; yet for all this, we Christians conclude, That Religion is a Business to be Transacted in our Closets only, it must not appear in the World to spoil Conversation, and we chuse to talk of any thing rather than of the best, and most sublime, as well as the most useful and most necessary Subject!

Ephes. 5. 359. St. Paul wou'd not have filthi-
3, 4. ness, nor foolish talkings, nor jestings which
are

are not convenient so much as once nam'd among Christians, but rather giving of Thanks. As much as to say, Mirth and the Refreshment of the Spirits are the usual pretence for frothy talk; but a Christian can cheer his Heart a much better way, even by remembering the Infinite and Innumerable Mercies of GOD, which call for our continual Acknowledgments and loudest Praises. But few of us take up the Son of Syrach's grateful Resolution, *The Lord hath given me a Tongue and I will praise Him therewith*, we seldom remember that *in the multitude of words there wanteth not Sin*, and that *he that refraineth his Lips is Wise*. And that *if any Man offend not in word, the same is a Perfect Man, and able also to bridle the whole Body*. But the Vices of the Tongue are too many to be enlarg'd on here, and when we have cut off all Prophanes and Unseemly, Cenforious and Detracting, Slanderous and False, Innatur'd and Scurrilous, Boasting and Vain, Rude and Flattering, Pragmatical and Impertinent Talk, there will not much remain I fear to keep up the common way of Conversation. Even the best and the most innocent one meets with, does only give us stronger impressions of sensible things, and withdraw our Minds from what is Spiritual

tual and Eternal; ties us more and more to this Present World, whereas our Perfection and Happiness consists in being loose to it: and I make no doubt but that our *Evil Communications*, have contributed more than any thing to the general *Corruption of our Manners*.

360. It may look affected to place the *not Judging* others among the Duties owing to our Selves, rather than among those that are due to our Neighbour, yet I shall venture to do it. Because *Censure* may sometimes be of use to others, but can never be so to us, who discern only the appearances of things, and this very imperfectly, and so can't but be ignorant of the merits of the Cause; and were we ever so well inform'd, yet wanting Authority, our Judgment must needs be rash and unjust, and as such is condemn'd and forbid by our Lord, and therefore whatever Injury our Neighbours may suffer by it, we our selves incur a greater, by drawing upon our heads His Severe and Righteous Judgment. *Censure* may do good to the World in that it is a check upon Vice and Carelesness; it may discover and convict the Guilty; may admonish the Innocent to walk with more circumspection; and by shewing every one

one what they are to expect unless they watch over their Actions, it may remove the occasion of Censure from such as Idly or Maliciously seek it. But this does no way justify the Censorious, who always does mischief to himself, whatever Good may accidentally happen to others. Nor can it be suppos'd that he exercises his Talent out of Public-Spiritedness; for it tends as much to the Public-Good to Praise and Encourage Vertue, as to blame and discountenance Vice.

361. *Charity* indeed is unsuspicious, it *thinks no Evil, it believeth all things, hopeth all things*, taking every Action by the best handle, making all allowances that the matter will bear. And what's the consequence of this? why generally speaking the Charitable Person will Think, or at least Speak better of most Men than they deserve. And if he does not make use of the *Prudence of the Serpent* in standing on his own guard, as well as of the *Innocency of the Dove* by inoffensiveness to others, 'tis like he may be over-reach'd, and without the special Providence and Protection of GOD, may some way or other suffer by it. And therefore when Mankind are generally corrupt, so that Charity it self can hardly Think or Speak well of them,

1 Cor. 13.

Matth. 10.
16, 17.

Acts 2.
49.

St. Peter's advice is certainly to take place, *Save your selves from this untoward Generation.* Beware of Men as our Lord directed, keep as much out of their way as innocently you can, not only by reason of the Injury one may suffer in their Temporal Affairs, but chiefly because of the damage that may happen to the Mind. Too frequent and sad Experience showing, That the Manners of the Good are more easily corrupted by the contagion of the Wicked, than these are reclaim'd by the good Example and Advice of the former. And if no other mischief falls out, a *Righteous Soul* will at least be vexed with the *daily Conversation* of the Ungodly; it will not without great difficulty be able to *possess it self in patience*, and to preserve that Meek and Charitable Temper which the Gospel requires. Nor ought any one so far to presume on their own Vertues, as to put them to an unnecessary trial.

362. For one of the subtlest Temptations that the Enemies of our Vertue and Honour can lay in our way, and which in all probability will ruin us if hearkned to, is the supposing that our Vertues are not perfect, or so much as sincere, unless they have stood a trial, and that therefore we ought to expose them.

them. Now it is very true that GOD never calls us to a Trial, that is, He never disposes of us by His Providence in such a manner as that we can't avoid a Temptation, but He also gives us Strength to overcome it, if we are not wanting to our selves, so that if we fall by this Temptation, 'tis too sure a sign that our Vertue was either not sincere, or very weak and defective. But it is also too true, that we never voluntarily expose our selves, but either thro' such a vain presumption as provokes GOD to leave us to our own ill conduct, in due correction for our Folly: Or else when the Temptation has got possession of our Hearts, and we want some pretence to say it was too strong for us. To be sure, we can have no well grounded confidence in GOD's Assistance, when we thus Foolishly and Wickedly Tempt Him, by running into Dangers which He Himself has taught us to pray against. And they are bold People who, considering the sad wrecks of Human Nature, will venture any where upon their own Strength. A hardiness that does not at all become us Women, the Stronger Sex as they call themselves, may shew it if they please. For it is certain, that if we mean in good earnest to keep our selves from Sin and Folly, we must not
parley

parley with our Enemy, but must carefully avoid the first beginnings, the occasions, all the approaches, and every appearance of, or tendency to Evil. If we do thus, it is not hard to come off Conquerors by the Grace which GOD affords us, but it is the height of Folly, and Contempt of GOD, to give up our Strength, to open the gates to our Enemy, and then complain that we are overcome.

Luke 21.
19.

Tit. 3^d 2.

1 Cor. 1.
20.

S. James
1. 21.

S. Jam. 3.
13.

363. As for *Meekness* it may be consider'd either by it self as it is oppos'd to Rash Anger, or else as a part of *Patience*, but consider them as we will, these two Vertues are absolutely necessary in order to Tranquility of Mind, which is the Heaven of this World. No unreasonableness in others can excuse us from behaving our selves Meekly towards them, because we are commanded to *shew all Meekness unto all Men*. Nor do the contentions and furious *Disputes of this World*, tend at all to the Service of Religion. For the *Word of GOD which is able to save our Souls*, is to be *receiv'd with Meekness*; with an humble disposition and readiness to admit of Truth upon a fair Examination, without captious cavils, or blending it with our Interests or Humours. *A good Conversation and the Meekness of Wisdom*, as it is

is the best evidence of a *Wise Man*, and one *endur'd with real Knowledge*, so it is the most probable way to convince the gain-sayers. For he is by no means fit to instruct and direct others, who has not first learnt to govern his own Tongue and to regulate his Passions.

364. Besides that branch of *Patience* which has an affinity with Meekness, and which goes somewhat further, for it not only suppresses our Anger, and makes us show *Gentleness to all Men*, so oft as we think fit to treat with them, but it also enables us to bear with their Stupidity and Perverseness, and is that *Long-suffering*, that *bearing all things*, and *hoping all things*, whereby the Charitable Christian continues his endeavours to reduce his Neighbours to Reason and to their true Interest, notwithstanding all discouragements, which is indeed a Godlike Temper, and the only Patience that the Divine Nature is capable of: But besides this, our Infirmary and Mortality make other sorts of Patience necessary for us. The Calamities of this Present Life, whether they be Sickness and Pain, or whatever else, are not only to be sustain'd with Fortitude, but submitted to with Humility, Meekness and Patience; thus we are commanded to be *Patient in Tribulation*,
2 Tim. 2. 24.
1 Thess. 5. 14.
Col. 3. 12.
1 Cor. 13.
Rom. 12. 12.

5. 3. and *Tribulation is said to work Patience.*
 There is also another sort of Patience or
Perseverance, in opposition to that hasti-
 ness of Spirit which prompts us to snatch
 at the Fruit before its proper Season, and
 expect to compass our End, without
 taking due Measures towards it; and
 either by an imprudent eagerness, or
 by inconstancy and weariness, makes
 us give out in our Christian Race be-
 fore we have receiv'd our Crown. And
 Luke 8. 15. therefore we are bid to *bring forth Fruit*
 with Patience or Perseverance, are told
 Heb. 10. the necessity of this Vertue, and are assur'd
 36. that without it we cannot *inherit the*
 Rom. 2. Promises. For when the Righteous turneth
 7. away from his Righteousness, and committeth
 Ezek. 18. Iniquity, and dieth in it, all his Righteous-
 24, 26. ness that he hath done shall not be mention'd,
 for his Iniquity that he hath done shall he die.
 In short, Patience is such a sedateness
 of Mind, as preserves us from being
 ruffled or discompos'd with the unrea-
 sonableness of Men, or the Miseries of
 Human Life, keeping us always ready
 to Do and Suffer the Will of GOD with
 Constancy unto the End.

365. To say all at once; to Act with-
 out any Principles is to Live by chance,
 and whatever it be it is not a Christian
 Action that is not Lawful in it self, and in
 all its Circumstances, and also perform'd
 upon

upon a Christian Principle, that is, for such an End, with such an Intention, and in such a Manner, as becomes a Christian. If I am Sober or Meek by Temper and Inclination; if I abstain from Scandalous Sins lest I hazard my Reputation; if I am not guilty of Murder or Theft out of fear of the Law; the advantage of Good Laws, of a Sense of Honour, and of a happy Constitution appears, but there's nothing of Religion in the matter. If *Passion*, and not Reason *kindles our Zeal* it is to be fear'd that it will be without *Knowledge*, and the same may be said of every other Vertue. For Christianity is a Reasonable Service, nor will the *Mind* ever be well *form'd*, or brought to a truly *Vertuous Religious Life*, where Reason conducted by Grace does not drive the *Chariot*, and manage the *Passions and Affections*. And as our Vertues are not true, so neither will they be lasting unless they proceed from a right Principle, and are done for the Honour of GOD, and in Obedience to His Commands. For he who recommends *Temperance* (as our Divine does) because it *promotes our* Ladies Religion,
p. 5. *Health*, says nothing to the purpose to People who tell one a debauch does them no hurt, or who pretend it does them good, and who use it by way of Physick.

sick. If we have no better motive to *Justice* than that it *prevents the Revenges of the Injur'd*, and *gains us Trust*; he who can conveniently betray a Trust without being discover'd, and who is too cunning or too powerful to be aw'd by the fear of Revenge, will allow himself to be as Unjust as he can be with Impunity; and he who is *Charitable* to others, only to *draw back their Love and Affection to himself*, will never practise the noblest Charity of doing good to those from whom we can't hope for any thing again. If we are *Patient* only for our own *Quiet*, and not in Obedience to GOD, we have our present Reward, and must not look for a Recompence from Him hereafter. If *Self-denial* goes no further than the *establishting the power of Reason over us*; according to some Mens account of Reason, *Self-denial* will never carry us on to take up our Cross and follow Christ, and yet without a readiness to do this, we can't be His Disciples.

Matth. 16.
24.

366. And therefore if we wou'd secure our Vertue, and render it acceptable to GOD, by uniting it to the Merits of Christ our Head, whereby it becomes truly Valuable, we must Act upon the same Principle, and with the same Design by which our Lord Acted, who tells us He *sought not His own Will, but*

but the Will of the Father who sent Him. For GOD's Will is steady and invincible, it allows no manner of dispensation for Iniquity of any kind, or upon any occasion; it forbids secret as well as open Sins; those which are profitable and in vogue, as well as such as are at present hurtful and decry'd; it lays restraints upon the Motions of the Will as well as upon the Words and Actions; our very Thoughts must be Pure and Innocent, because they are manifest in Heb. 4. His Sight who is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity, without condemning it. And if we thus desire and endeavour to approve our selves to the Searcher of Hearts, whatever is done out of Reverence to GOD, tho' it be ever so small and indifferent in it self, it becomes a Religious Action; for a Cup of Cold Water Matth. 10. given to a Disciple in the Name of a Disciple, shall not lose its Reward.

367. But tho' a Pious Intention will give value to an indifferent Action, yet no Intention how good soever can justify, or so much as excuse a Wicked one. An Excellent and Judicious Prelate has prov'd to us, That we must not do the least Sin, that of a harmless officious Lye, no not for the Glory of GOD, and then certainly not for any other inferiour end, not for the saving
 “ of

Bishop
 Sanderson,
 Sermon 2.
 p. 30. Ed.

“ of a Life, the Conversion of a Soul,
“ the Peace of the Church, and (if even
“ that were possible too) not for the Re-
“ demption of the World. With what
detestation think you wou’d he look
down from his blifs, were he sensible of
the lose Morals of Modern Guides!
Indeed we take such pains to hide our
Intentions from others, that often they
become hid from our selves; and being
accustom’d to say we design all for GOD’s
Glory, we come at last to believe that
we are in earnest. Tho’ one wou’d
think the fallacy of these pretences is so
evident, that they cou’d not impose
even upon our own Partial Selves. For
does not GOD Govern the World? and
is He not infinitely Jealous of His own
Glory? which therefore must and will
be provided for, in spite of the opposi-
tion of Men and Devils. What is it
then that puts us in such Fury or De-
spair when our designs miscarry? It
can’t be a Zeal for GOD’s Glory, be-
cause this will be taken care of what-
ever becomes of us and our projects:
But that which in reality disquiets us,
is the disappointment of our own little
private Aims.

368. As for the Circumstances and
the Manner of Acting, they have in
part been consider’d already. And
doubt-

doubtless if we take care of the Innocency, and much more if we have regard to the Beauty of our Actions, we must remember our Characters, the Rank and Station GOD has plac'd us in, the Gifts He has bestow'd upon us, the Reputation and Esteem we have acquir'd. For to do any thing that misbecomes us, by being contrary to what is justly expected from us on any of these accounts, tho' otherwise, and simply consider'd, it were not unlawful, is however unlawful to us, because of its Inexpediency and Ill-Report, and for this reason it is a Sin against GOD as well as a Dishonour and Injury to our Selves. And when we have thus secur'd the Matter and the Circumstances of our Actions, that is, when upon an impartial and full examination they are found to be both Lawful and Expedient, we are then to take care that we do not pollute them by an Evil Intention; nor lessen and sully them by a low and unworthy one; nor disgrace them by our vicious and uncomely Manner of performance.

369. Some Gains and Worldly Advantages tho' they may be Lawful, shou'd however be let alone because they are not Honourable, or because we can't convince the World that they are. For Selfish Designs, and Private

B b

Interest

Interest are such disgraceful Motives, such contemptible Aims, and so much beneath a Christian, that tho' we don't indeed propose them, yet if we can't so clear our selves, but that they appear to be the Reason of our Actions, 'tis better to forbear these Actions if they are not matter of Precept and necessary, even tho' we may flatter our selves with specious pretences of Future Good by them. It being certain that a false Step at first will spoil our Race; and he for instance, who gets an Estate Unjustly or Dishonourably, by any Tricking, Indirect, or Unhandsome ways, will never be Able, I had almost said shall never be *Willing*, to do the Good he seem'd to propose by his Acquirements. Those plausible pretences and designs we form, being nothing else but the Deceit and Corruption of our Hearts, to blind others, and to quiet the Reproaches of our own Minds.

370. And therefore, we are in the first place to observe the Laws of GOD strictly so call'd, that is the Positive and Direct Commands and Prohibitions laid down in Holy Writ. For in a latitude all that follows may be call'd GOD's Laws, as being referr'd to, and taking their Obligation from them. In the next place the Commands of our
Lawful

Lawful Governours are to be Actually Obey'd, if they are not inconsistent with Laws of GOD; or if they can't be Obey'd they must be patiently Submitted to. After this we must take care that we avoid giving Scandal; and must consider and observe the Laws of Reputation; together with all the other Rules of Decency and Expediency, which do not fall under the former particulars. And in the last place, we are at liberty to comply with our own Inclinations, which may Lawfully be follow'd when all the rest are provided for, but not otherwise.

371. For when there are Probabilities on each side, as to the Lawfulness or Unlawfulness, the Expediency or Inexpediency, the Scandal and Disreputation, or the Innocency and Indifferency of the Action, I take it for a good rule to determine against that side to which Humour and Inclination wou'd carry me. Because the Heart is deceitful above all things, and there can be no hurt in denying my Self, or restraining my Liberty, either to secure my Obedience to GOD or to Just Authority, or for the greater Safety and Advantage of my own or my Neighbours Soul, or even for the sake of a good Reputation. To be sure, we can never warrantably venture on that Action to the Scandal

and Disreputableness of which we have nothing to oppose, but it's bare Innocency or Indifferency, and the suppos'd future opportunities of doing some good by it, together with a present strong Inclination, which last is indeed the weight that turns the Scale, and almost always to our prejudice.

372. By all that has hitherto been said it appears, That the *Frailties* and *Infirmities* of the best Proficients in Grace, are not the same with those which the mere *Disciples of Nature* fall into: If we say that we have no Sin we deceive our Selves; and to pretend to Vertues which we have not, or to appear better than we really are, is Hypocrisie; but to endeavour to be (a) *Perfect*, is to do what GOD Commands. Who has Instituted a Holy Religion not on purpose to pull us down, but to lead us (b) on unto Perfection, and to (c) make us Perfect in every good Work to do His Will; not to upbraid the *Vileness* of our Nature, but to cure it. Nor does any Man who truly knows himself, even tho' he be the greatest Saint, stand in need of the *Malignity* of his Sins, to teach him to give GOD the Glory, and to take Shame unto himself; for his entire dependance upon GOD will teach him better Manners than any those Messengers of Satan can buffet him

(a) Matth.
5. 48.
2 Cor. 13.
11.

(b) Heb.
6. 1.

(c) Heb.
13. 21.

him into, and be the best demonstration that he is but Man. There is no necessity therefore to be Vicious that we may be Humble, they who find no other way to Humble us but by our being *subject to Passions and Infirmities*, do not indeed preach up more Humility than their Neighbours, but only more *Vileness*. And by all that appears from the Practice of Mankind, the People who so little *affect to be counted Godlike*, that they are not yet *escap'd from the common pollutions of the World*, are so far from being more Humble or Modest than others, that too many of them glory in their Shame.

373. Scarce any thing is more mistaken than Sins of Infirmity, or does more hurt both ways, by too much scruple, I mean, on one hand, and too much Indulgence on the other. Where there is an honest Heart, and but a weak Understanding, the Sincere Christian's true Love to GOD, and consequently his utter abhorrence of all Sin, and of all the approaches towards it, which thus far is very right and good, makes him afflict himself unreasonably at such mere Human and Unindulg'd Infirmities, as are the Spots of the best Children, as if these wou'd deprive him of GOD's Favour, in which he is much

mistaken. And this is one of the last Temptations whereby the Enemy of our Souls assaults us; who when he finds us so well resolv'd as not to be Tempted to Sin, tries to disturb us and to stop our progress in Holiness; to rob us of our Comfort, when he can't deprive us of our Integrity.

374. But it is not too much Scruple but too much Indulgence that is the common fault, and of most dangerous consequence. It is the taking our notions of Sin and Duty from Popular Opinions and Practices, not from the Pure Light of Holy Scripture and Right Reason. It is the making those Infirmities which good People always strive against and endeavour to Conquer, the measure of our Conduct and the utmost of our Aim. We are content to serve GOD in some things, such as don't cross our Inclinations and Worldly Interests, in hopes he will connive at us in others. And then we cry, every one, even the best, have their *Passions*, their *Frailties* and *Infirmities*, and we have ours. By which we don't mean the unavoidable weaknesses of Human Nature, which will stick to us as long as Mortality does, but our wilful and indulg'd Transgressions, that *Right Hand* and *Right Eye* which our Lord commands us to cast from

Matth. 18.
8, 9.

from us, the Sin that so easily besets us, and which indeed has Dominion over us. Tho' whether we will consider it or no, 'tis plain from the Tenor of the Gospel, That such an Infirmary as this is not consistent with our Duty to GOD and our Hopes of Heaven. The very design of our Saviour's coming into the World, being to purifie to Himself a peculiar People Zealous of Good Works. And this being a matter of great Importance, and not always duly represented, it may not be amiss to set it in a right Light; for tho' there is a great Respect due to Superiors, and to those of a certain Rank more particularly, yet the greatest is due to Truth.

375. That GOD commandeth all Men every where to Repent, and has promis'd that upon true Repentance (which is a Change of Life) they shall find Mercy, is indeed the Fundamental Notion of the Gospel. And it is also true, That GOD has not bid a Man put off all his Passions, taking Passion in a strict and proper sense, exclusive of those Vices into which our Natural Passions too often hurry us; for Christianity does not extirpate the Passions, it only teaches us to place them upon their proper Objects, as has been already said. But if any one by Passions will needs understand Sins,

such as *Pride, Anger, Hatred, and overwhelming Sorrow, &c.* 'tis very certain that
 Col. 3. 8. the Gospel commands us *to put off all these*
 of what kind soever, assuring us that
 such *Sinful Flesh and Blood can't inherit*
 1 Cor. 15. *the Kingdom of GOD.* Nor is this at
 5th.
 Heb. 12. all *inconsistent with Humanity or Impracti-*
 cable, there being *so great a Cloud of Wit-*
 1.
 See Rom. *nesses, who thro' the Spirit have mortify'd*
 8. *the deeds of the Body.* And therefore far
 be it from any Christian to say, That
 GOD has made us *Subject unto Sin* any
 otherwise than by giving us *Liberty*
 which we make an ill use of. For the
 Gospel is express, That *Sin shall not have*
 Rom. 6. *Dominion over us; and let no Man say when*
 14.
 S. James I. *he is Tempted, I am Tempted of GOD, for*
 43. *GOD cannot be Tempted with Evil, neither*
Tempteth He any Man.

376. Sin being an opposition to the
 Will of GOD, an opposing of our Wills
 to His, whereby we are depriv'd of
 Union with Him, and consequently of
 Happiness, it is no great difference whe-
 ther this opposition proceeds from Igno-
 rance, Infirmary, or Malice; only Ma-
 lice is so much the worse, as it expresses
 a greater Contempt of GOD, and is
 more hard to be reclaim'd. But our
 Ignorances and Infirmities are not whol-
 ly free from Wilfulness, for if there
 were no irregularity of the Will in them
 they

they cou'd not be Sins, for all Sin is Voluntary. Our Opinions and Consciences may make that a Sin to us which in it self is Lawful and Indifferent, because the Will is as much in fault and in opposition to GOD's Will, when we do that which we take to be a Sin, tho' really and in its self it is none, as if it were indeed Unlawful: But no Opinion of ours or of other Peoples, no Example, no Custom, no Authority, can make that Lawful to us which is in its self a Sin. Thro' the Satisfaction and Intercession of Christ all Sin is so far Pardonable, that upon Sincere Repentance, which implies a Sorrow in some sort proportionable to the degree of our Guilt, a Sorrow proceeding from the Love of GOD, and a forsaking our Evil ways and returning to Him, we shall be receiv'd to Mercy.

377. Hence I conclude, That if by *Infirmities* and *Frailties* are meant such a daily imperfection and falling short of our Duty and Desires, as is incident to the Best Christians, such as is not inconsistent with the Favour of GOD, but which shall be pardon'd upon a general Repentance, and thro' the Grace of the New Covenant, and which wou'd not be imputed to us tho' we shou'd be surpriz'd by Sudden Death; Then Affected Ignorance

John 3.
20.

Prov. 1.
29.

Ignorance that shuns Instruction refusing to make use of the means of *Knowledge*, that *hates the Light*, and will not come unto it least its deeds shou'd be Reprov'd, and this pretence of Ignorance taken from it, is so far from being harmless or a pitiable Infirmary, that it is in truth a great aggravation of Guilt. For this Ignorance is voluntary, it is not so much a fault in the Understanding, as a perverseness in the Will, which *despises Knowledge and does not choose the Fear of the Lord*, and therefore is not reconcilable with His Love. No Surprise or Passion how violent and great soever, can wholly excuse our doing of any thing that GOD has expressly forbid, or render it an Infirmary consistent with His Favour. For whoever is in a state of Love to GOD, is always on his guard against great and manifest Sins; if he Sins like *David*, he can't be restor'd but by *David's* Solemn, and Bitter, and Lasting Repentance. It matters not whether they be *Sins to which our Constitution leads us*, that overcome us, or whether we *Sin against the current of our Nature*, this may have more Wilfulness, but both are *Unpardonable* without Repentance, which is a *ceasing to do Evil, and learning to do Well*, and is the Conditional Cause why the Gospel does not

not condemn us for every Vice. Again, such a proneness to Sin as carries us to commit it unwittingly, must not be call'd an Infirmary, it is an Habitual Guilt, arising from many Evil Actions wilfully repeated. Further, a good Christian may be surpriz'd once or twice, but can't be surpriz'd often in the same instance; for he is not to live loosely and without examination, he is to be acquainted with his own Temper and Weakness, to consider and guard against the Temptations to which he is most expos'd, to *grow in Grace*, to know his Faults and to Reform them.

378. It must be confest, That our Understandings being Finite, we can't consider many things at once, or always view an Object on all it's sides, and may happen to be under a necessity of Acting, before we have fully consider'd how we ought to Act, whereby we may mistake and transgress the Righteous Law of GOD. But He is Merciful to this Infirmary, if in the general course of our Lives we take care to fence against it. If we furnish our Mind with a stock of Good Principles which will serve like way-marks to direct our steps. If we have in general a good Intention, singly aiming at the Glory of GOD, and the Salvation of our Souls, If we maintain

maintain Reason in her Throne, by keeping our Passions cool, and our Affections disingag'd from Worldly things, preserving hereby a constant presence of Mind, neither overwhelm'd with Cares, nor dissipated by vain Mirth, or diverted by any trifling Amusement. If we are thus prepar'd, by the Grace of GOD, which is never wanting to them who are not wanting to themselves, we shall be more than Conquerors. For GOD wou'd not have shewn us *the true way to subdue our Passions*, if He had not expected that we shou'd subdue them. And to suppose, That *our Saviour's coming upon Earth and Dying for us, is a plain intimation that there are such vicious Principles within us as cannot be subdu'd*; and to conclude from so extraordinary a Redemption, That we lie under a moral Impossibility of avoiding Sin, notwithstanding those Succours of Grace which the Spirit of Christ dispences to all His Members, is the most Slandrous Report that can be brought upon the Gospel. Because the SON of GOD took upon Him our Nature that He might *cure* our Sinful Passions, as well as make atonement for them. And those who will not be *cur'd* are the Persons who *bring a Reproach upon His Divine Art*; for how is it that Religion improves Nature,

ture, but by teaching us to *subdue* those *Passions* it does not *extinguish*?

379. In fine, doing what ought not to be done, is very rarely the Infirmary of a Good Christian, whose *Frailties* are Omissions of Duty, and this not total Omissions neither, but Defects in some Circumstances, so that they are Imperfections rather than Sins. Thus an unforeseen accident may occasion the omission or shortning of our Daily Offices of Devotion, but this can't be often without a faulty negligence. We are too frequently unaffected and wandering in our Prayers, and not so Attent and Devout as we ought to be; yet this is to be provided against, it must not be indulg'd or neglected, least it conclude in an Indevout and Formal Temper, and so be no longer a pitiable Infirmary. For the Frailties of a true Christian are offences against the Rules of Expediency, but seldom if ever against the plain and positive Commands and Prohibitions of the Divine Law. They arise from want of ability or leisure to compare things as we ought, whereby we happen to prefer a lesser Good to a greater; or it may be now or then without any fault of the Will, at least any direct one, to take Evil for Good, or Good for Evil in some obscure or difficult Cases; and this

this seems to me the utmost latitude that can be given to our *Passions, Frailties, and Infirmities*.

Acts 14.
15.

380. A Christian therefore is not a *Man of like Passions with other Men*, if by *Passions* be meant *Vices*. He is Mortal 'tis true, and must not be ador'd as a God, which was all that the Apostles meant when they told the *Lycaonians*, *We also are Men of like Passions with you*. So that in Charity it is to be suppos'd, that whoever attempts to prove, That the most sanctify'd Professors of Religion are yet subject to *Passions as well as other Men*, takes it for granted that all Christian People distinguish rightly between the pitiable Infirmities of Human Nature, such as Bodily Indisposition, Pain and Sicknefs, want of Recollection, Surprize and Shortness of view; and *Anger and Hatred, Pride and overwhelming Sorrow, Indulgence to Sensuality*, and the like. For these last are not in truth their *Passions, Frailties, or Infirmities*, but their wilful Sins; and to apply Holy Scripture to excuse such transgressions as these, is to Burlesque rather than to expound it.

1 Tim. 4.
12, &c.

381. St. Paul I am sure gives no countenance to such Doctrines; he was what he exhorts his Successors to be, an *Example to Believers*, and in what? but

in

in Charity, in Faith, in Purity, in Spirit, as this is oppos'd to Sense. It was upon these things he meditated, to these he *wholly apply'd himself, that his profiting might appear to all.* He watch'd both over *himself and his Doctrine,* knowing that loose Morality is not less pernicious than erroneous Articles of Faith. He tells his *Thessalonians,* That *they themselves know how they ought to follow him,* 2 Thess. 3. 7. for he behav'd not himself disorderly among them; now disorders usually attend upon Passions, especially vicious ones. The works of the Flesh as he enumerates them, Gal. 5. 19, &c. were none of his Passions, for he assures us, That *they who do such things shall not Inherit the Kingdom of GOD,* and that they who are Christs have *crucify'd the Flesh with the Affections, or Passions* as the Margin reads, and *Lusts.* And therefore it is evident, That St. Paul and the Holy Apostles, were not Men of such Passions as get the dominion over the generality of Christians now a-days, and which we are too apt to indulge under any Fig-leave pretences.

382. *The Fruits of the Spirit, Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance, against which there is no Law,* these were St. Paul's Passions. The *Infirmities* he 2 Cor. 12. took 10.

took Pleasure in were Reproaches, Necessities, Persecutions, Distresses for Christ's Sake.

1 Cor. 11. He bids us *be followers of him*, but only
1. as *he is of Christ*, who was a Man like unto us, subject to all the Innocent Passions of Human Nature, but to one

Isai. 53. of the Criminal. He was a *Man of Sor-*
row, and acquainted with Grief, Passions I doubt we don't care to follow Him in. Many of the Ancient Christians indeed

1 Thess. 1. *became followers of the Lord and of us* says
6. St. Paul, to cite him once more in his own vindication, for tho' they liv'd in Persecuting times, so that *they receiv'd the Gospel in much Affliction*, yet they also *receiv'd it with Joy of the Holy Ghost*, and in these Passions, and in these only, can we alledge the Examples of Holy Men, or will they justifie us. For that their Faults *are noted in GOD's Book*, is not so much to shew us, *That there is nothing Perfect upon Earth*, as to admonish us to be ever upon our guard, since the best of Men have been so apt to slip: And to let the greatest Sinners know, That they ought not to Despair, but shou'd *turn from their Transgressions* as those Holy Men did, and then *Iniquity will not be their Ruin*. 'Tis the Piety and Religion, not the Failings of the Saints that are upon Record for our Example; nor must we imagin that if we
cou'd

cou'd but come to be Men of like Vertues, we need make no matter of being Men of like Passions; for upon this supposition, we may indulge our Passions to our destruction, but we are never like to imitate their Vertues in order to our Salvation.

383. But alas! tho' the Happiness of the next World is so infinitely desirable, and the Misery of losing it so intolerable, that we are extremely wanting to our selves, if we neglect to make a diligent enquiry, not only into all those methods which may secure it to us, but even into such as will qualifie us for the highest degrees of Bliss; yet who considers further than to do just so much as may quiet his Conscience, and keep him, as he thinks, out of the Pit of Destruction? We ask how little will suffice, not how much may be attain'd; and are not solicitous to Conquer our Infirmities, but how to indulge them with Impunity. We fancy all is well, or well enough, if no crying Sin stares us in the face; if we speak of Religion decently; say our Prayers in Public and Private; give some Alms; and at certain times condemn our selves and purpose to do better, and approach the Lord's Table in this sort of Wedding Garment. We reckon upon the Good

we wish, or design to do, supposing we continue long enough in this Mind, that nothing hinder, that we remember it, and that no Business, Company, Diversion, or any Temptation come in our way. We think our selves Saints if we are Zealots for a Party; and that we do GOD great Service when we labour to make Profelytes, not to Religion but to our Faction. If we do but abhor Idols, we concludes this gives allowance to commit Sacrilege; and if we preserve our Reputation, we fancy this invests us with Authority to dispose of other Peoples, and to censure them rigidly. With the Pharisee, we put it among the Catalogue of our Vertues, that we are not so bad as other Men are, tho' possibly this Betterness, is nothing else but our Pride or our Hypocrisie!

Matth. 7.
13, 14.

Matth. 11.
30.
Prov. 3.
17.

384. If any one thinks I have made the terms of Salvation too strict, they may please to remember *That straight is the Gate, and narrow is the Way that leads to Life, and few there be that find it.* Not but that Christianity in it self is an *easy Yoke and a light burden, the way to Heaven is Pleasantness, and all its paths are Peace.* It is only become strait and thorny to us, (as has been already hinted) thro' those evil dispositions we have wilfully contracted. We must

must not think to pass it, with all the luggage of this World about us; they who give us such hopes, who *sew Pillows* Isa. 30.16. *to our Elbows, and Prophecy smooth things,* do only *Prophecy Deceit*. Truth it self having assur'd us, that we can't *serve* Matth. 6. 24. *GOD and Mammon*; nor can we possibly at one and the same time, walk in the broad Road of the World that leads to Destruction, and in the narrow Path that leads to Life Everlasting. For how can we in Conscience and with all our Partiality, expect Heaven and Infinite Felicity, when we do less to obtain it than we do for an Estate, a Place, or something yet more inconsiderable!

385. It is easie and fatal to do too little, impossible to do too much, and unspeakably advantageous to do all that we can. What can be so dreadful and tormenting on this side Hell, as the being unable when we come to Die, to pass a favourable Judgment on our final State, according to the true importance of the Gospel Covenant! Our Attendants and Friends, the Pleasures we have formerly enjoy'd, the Riches and Honours we leave behind us, will afford no Consolation; they will rather afflict and gall us with stinging Remorse for the Sins they have occasion'd. The having *fought a good Fight and finish'd our Course*, in prospect

prospect of *that Crown of Glory* which attends us, will be the only Cordial in this great necessity. For it is somewhat of the latest to begin to Live when we are about to Die; and supposing us ever so Sincere at this time, and that we are as real Penitents as the Contrite Thief was upon the Cross, tho' by the way, his Circumstances and ours are not at all alike; yet supposing GOD will indeed out of His Superabundant and Uncovenanted Grace, have Mercy on us, this is more than we can justly or reasonably promise our selves, and therefore it is no just allay of our Fears, nor can afford us any true Consolation.

386. For unless we have in the time of Health prepar'd our selves for the Divine Mercy, according to the Terms of Salvation offer'd in the Gospel, and before the strong fears of a Death-bed seize us, we have no proof of our own Sincerity, no solid ground of Hope, but must go out of this World into an irreversible State for Eternity, in all that Fear and Agony, which must needs torment thole who have so important a Stake depending on the utmost hazard. And I wou'd fain know whether all that this World affords can be an Equivalent for these most miserable Circumstances.

Surely

Surely I wou'd not endure this horror, even tho' it shou'd end well, for all that this present Life has to Flatter or Threaten me with!

387. But what way to avoid it? none that I know of, except by *working whilst it is Day*, for *when the Night cometh none can work*. And let it not be said, that after all our endeavours we can't be sure of our Final State; for tho' it is very true, that when we *have done all that is commanded we are but Unprofitable Servants, having done no more than was our Duty to do*: Yet such a saying has but an ill grace in the Mouths of those who are so far from doing their utmost, that they scarce do any thing at all. 'Tis true, that considering the difficulty because the excellency of the Work, the greatness of the Reward, the infinite distance between G O D and us, the Holiness of His Majesty, and the deceitfulness of our own Hearts, it will become us to humble our selves with the lowest prostration of Spirit before His Judgment Seat, to approach His Presence with Holy Awe and Reverential Fear, and without any Confidence in our selves, tho' much in our Redeemer. But to say that G O D has not plainly told us what He requires of us, is to charge Him foolishly: And to suppose that we

are not, or can't be conscious of our own Sincerity, is to destroy the Faculties of the Mind and is contrary to Reason and Experience. The premises indeed from whence the Conclusion is drawn are not equally evident; for the first depends upon G O D's Infallible Testimony, the other only upon our own Fallible Judgment. And therefore, tho' it is Infallibly true, that if I have perform'd what G O D requires I shall be Saved thro' the Merits of Christ, yet it is not equally certain that I have done this. But there is a way to remove this troublesome uncertainty in great measure, and that is by *giving all diligence to make our Calling and Election sure*; and one wou'd think we had lost our Reason as well as our Religion, if we make any thing besides this our *Business*.

S E C T.

S E C T. V.

388. **T**Hus Madam, I have given your
 Ladiship an account of my
 Principles, and of what I am convinc'd I
 ought, and which therefore I desire and
 endeavour to Practise, submitting it to the
 Censure of my Proper Superiors in the
Church of GOD, the Pillar and Ground of
Truth. If any Private Christian will take
 the trouble to shew me where I am in the
 wrong, I shall hold my self Oblig'd to
 him, and shall neither be asham'd to
 Retract an Error, to Reform a Fault,
 or to pay my Thankful Acknowledg-
 ments to any one who will be so kind
 as to Admonish me. 'Tis like I might
 have brought my Thoughts into a
 shorter compass, but some reigning
 offences are so little consider'd, I was
 going to say so much excus'd and justi-
 fy'd, that it seem'd not improper to
 attack them on all sides, and to re-
 mind us often of what we constantly for-
 get.

389. Some perhaps will think there's
 too much of the Woman in it, too much
 of my particular Manner and Thoughts.
 It may be so; but as an Affecta-

tion of other Peoples ways is generally Ridiculous, so the keeping up to our own Characters is that which best becomes us. And there is this Advantage in it, that if these Papers shall survive me, by speaking Truths which no *Man* wou'd say, they will appear to be genuine, and no *Man* will be blam'd for their Imperfections. I am sensible that by giving this account of Christianity according to its Truth and Purity, I have made a sort of Satyr on my self and others, whose Practice falls so very short of our Profession. But if any who read their faults in this Letter, shall think themselves aim'd at, and be offended at it, they will be unjust to me by rash Judgment, and by depriving me of the only way I have to do them Service; and unkind to themselves, by raising a prejudice against the Truth, instead of being convinced and amended by it. For Moral Discourses unless they are very particular do no good upon a Reader, every one being apt to justify or excuse his own Conduct, and to believe he is unconcern'd. So that a Book is only so many words to no manner of purpose, except the Reader, even him whom the Author never so much as heard of, finds his own Picture in it, and is forc'd to

to say to himself, *I am the Man*. I design indeed to do all the Good I can, which seems to me to be a Christian's Duty, and those who won't suffer us to do it one way, must be content to receive it another. If any are offended at my manner of doing it, let them be pleas'd to shew me a better, and I shall thankfully follow it.

390. For happy wou'd it be for us, we shou'd be truly Christians, whereas without it we are only so in name, if instead of those Resentments and conceal'd grudges, those Animosities and bitter Envyings, those Detractions and Revilings, and that, — I can't say, never Forgiving, for this in strictness supposes an Injury, whereas the greatest Service perhaps is that which offends, but that never ceasing Malice so common among us, and which arises too often, rather from our Neighbour's Vertues and our own Vices, than from any real Injury he has done us: But Happy wou'd it be if instead of this Temper which absolutely excludes us from the Divine Mercy, we wou'd observe our Lord's Command, which is generally dispens'd with by one knows not what Authority, and with Christian Simplicity and Goodwill, go and tell our Neighbour himself what it was we took amiss from

from him. We shou'd indeed be asham'd to say, That his Merit hurt our Eyes, and that his Vertue is the Injury we know not how to forgive. We shou'd blush to confes, that because we had once done an Injury and were asham'd to own it, therefore we resolve to pursue, as we imagine, to cover and justifie it by doing more. But then if we have any remains of Ingenuity this wou'd shame away our Uncharity, and shew us how little of Human Nature, much less of a Christian, and how much of the Devil, there is in such a temper.

391. As it happens, I have said nothing that the nicest Breeding can except against with regard to Your Ladyship, unless they will reckon me Unmannerly, for Writing so disrepectfully of Worldly Advantages, to a Lady whose Christian Conversation does them so much Honour. All I have to say for my self is only this, That tho' the Readers may be displeas'd with the freedom I have taken with their grand Prerogatives, yet it's like I am not much in the wrong, since, whatever they do at other times, in their Sober moods and Wisest hours, in *Lent*, against *Christmas*, and in all their Preparations for the Holy Sacrament, they
Think

Think and Say just as I do. If these good Thoughts go off and they forget themselves, I am sorry for it; but Truth is constant and self-consistent, it is the *same Yesterday, to Day, and for Ever.* And if Truth shall pierce their Hearts, the present Remedy I know will be to lay the Book aside, and to think no more of it, till the next periodical return of a Fit of Devotion. A Remedy for whose Success I can't answer; for a time will certainly come when no Diversions will be found to Silence, nor indeed any way whatsoever left to ward off their Convictions.

392. Did I know of a darling Fault in those I love the most, tho' it were a Right Hand or Right Eye, I shou'd not spare it for this reason, tho' supposing them govern'd by the common Principles of the World, this were an infallible way to lose their Favour. But I had much rather lose it than deserve to lose it, and therefore they shou'd not rest till the darling were thrown out, or at least till they had convinc'd me they were resolv'd not to part with it. For if this were the Case, one must give over with the sad thought, that the Idea one had form'd of them, and what one Lov'd and Valu'd, was only the Image of one's own Fancy. They
wou'd

wou'd then be no more what one had taken them for, no more what one cou'd Esteem and Love, but what must be always Pity'd and Deplor'd!

393. And now give me leave, Madam, to add a few Remarks on our Divines Letter, and then I have done. What his Practise was I know not, nor am I to judge of it, to his *own Master he stands or falls*; but this I may say, that there are many Divines who tho' they do all that in them lies to *Defend the Church by Law Establish'd*, are not for this reason at all less zealous in *promoting the common Cause of Serious Piety*, but rather the more so, the one being subservient to the other. Whether or no he addicted himself to *Superstitious Appendages and Bye-interest* he best knows; nor does any Man serve the Church by such ways, however he may serve himself. Our Divine acquits the Church of encouraging such Practises, otherwise he cou'd not continue what the Title speaks him, *a Divine of the Church of England*. For a Man of Sincerity and Candor must think as the *French Prefacer* does, that he cou'd *not be silent on such an occasion without betraying his Conscience*. To be sure he wou'd not live in the Churches Bosom and secretly undermine her, for this is contrary to Justice, Ingenuity, and

Ladies
Religion,
p. 2.

and Moral Honesty, to say nothing of the Simplicity and Integrity of a Christian.

394. His design, according to the *French Prefacer*, is to show, that the Christian Religion ought to be accommodated to the meanest Capacity, and in his own words, *To spare the needless trouble of reading Abstruse and Mysterious points of Divinity.* I am so much of his Mind, that shou'd any Learned Divine tell me, *That it was generally believ'd of old that Diety was made up of two Co-ordinate Powers*, bringing Latin and Greek, nay, even *Persian* to prove it; shou'd he offer to inform me of the *Original Word* which we render *Devils*, and how great Men have Commented upon it: I wou'd beg to be excus'd from entering into such *nice Speculations*, or *profound Mysteries*, which have no direct tendency to improve my *Morals*, and which therefore in the opinion of the Author of the *Ladies Religion*, might well be *past by*. For I only understand plain Sense, being satisfy'd that this is all that the Gospel is design'd to teach me; and that it's Sacred Author did not mean to trouble my head with curious Criticisms and strain'd Interpretations.

395. That

395. That Prefacer also tells us,
“ That in the First Ages of the Church,
“ Bishops, true Court-weather-cocks,
“ turn’d about with every little Wind,
“ to conform themselves to the Pleasure
“ of the Prince. To take no notice
how well this agrees with what he says
a few Pages after of rash and hasty
Judgment. By the First Ages of the
Church must be meant the First Centu-
ries. Now, I confess I am but a very
mean Historian, and therefore possibly
may be mistaken, in supposing that the
World was under Heathen Princes un-
til the Reign of *Constantine* the Great,
who flourish’d in the beginning of the
Third Century. So that *St. James* and
Simeon whom the Apostles made Bishops
of *Jerusalem* successively, together with
those other Bishops ordain’d by them
in all Cities, of many of whom we have
honourable mention in the Holy Scrip-
ture, as *St. Mark* who was Bishop of
Alexandria, *Timothy* of *Ephesus*, and after
him *Onesimus*, *Titus* of *Crete*, *Silas* of *Co-
rinth*, *Dionysius* of *Athens*, *Archippus* of
Coloss, *Epaphroditus* of *Philippi*, *Trophimus*
of *Arles*, *Crescens* of *Vienne*, *Aristobulus*
in *Britain*, *Aristarchus*, and after him
Gaius of *Thessalonica*, and *Linus* of *Rome*:
These Holy Men if the Prefacer may be
credited, conform’d themselves to the
Pleasure

Pleasure of those Heathen Princes who held the Empire at that time! Or else *Nero* and his Successors were Christians, and favourers of some little Heresies, with which these *Weather-cock Bishops* comply'd, either of which is a piece of Criticism I must own I had not till now met with!

396. I am also so dull, that as plain as our Divine is, I can't apprehend what he means by Faith, p. 8. For if he understands no more by *Faith in Christ* than our receiving the *Christian Morals*, and the *Threats* and *Promises* of the *Gospel*, in order to *Practice*, what becomes of the *narrations of matters of Fact*, which is part of the *Christian Insti-* p. 11.
tution? And at that rate one might have Faith in Christ without believing that there ever was such a Person in the World, who was Born of a Virgin, Liv'd an Exemplary Life, and Died a bitter Death for our Redemption. But sure our Divine cou'd not mean to countenance so extravagant a Proposition, nor will I suspect that he affects to be dark and *mysterious*, because I won't sup- p. 10.
pose that he *has some indirect design in so doing*.

397. It were to be wish'd that there were no Controversies, no *Writers* and Reason. of
Wranglers in Religion, to fill it with rice- Christian.
ties p. 305.

ties and dress it up with Notions; but that all of us, whether Divines or others,

2 Tim. 1. receiv'd the Truth in the Love thereof,
13. holding fast the form of Sound Words, set
Ephes. 4. forth in Holy Writ, in Faith and Love,
3. endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit
in the bond of Peace. But since the Holy
2 Tim. 3. Ghost has foretold, That in the last days
1. perilous times shall come, that grievous
Acts 20. Wolves shall enter in among Christians, not
29, 30. sparing the Flock; and that even among the
Elders of the Church shall Men arise, speak-
ing perverse things to draw away Disciples af-
ter them; it is requisite for the Governours
of the Church to * Watch, † contending
* 2 Tim. earnestly for the Faith, to convince and stop
4. 5. the mouths of the Gain-sayers. Some Con-
† S. Jude troversies therefore are become necessary
3. thro' the perverseness of Men of Corrupt
Minds.

398. Our Divine has not thought fit to let us know, what those *many Books of Controversial Divinity* he has read treat of, so that for fear of falling under his Censure for *Rash Judgment*, I dare not guess at those *Controversies* which he does not reckon to be matters of *mere Religion*. But by the few *Controversies* I have look'd into, I find it has been disputed between us and the Church of *Rome*, whether we shou'd Worship the *Consecrated Elements* in the *Lord's Supper*?

Supper? and whether we shou'd Pray to Saints and Angels? And by others, whether any but the Great GOD ought to be Worshipp'd? I know not how far our Divine may have entred into these Controversies, but certainly the *Object* of Divine Worship is a matter of *mere* p. 21.
Religion; and I think he ought to be so understood in his first instance of such matters, (*viz.*) *Whether we shou'd maintain in our Hearts a high Reverence and Veneration for Almighty GOD?* It being very sure that GOD will not give His Glory to another; and that no *Divine* p. 36.
Person whatever, tho' His *Charity* and *Heroic Fortitude* be ever so great, is to be Worshipp'd, unless he be one of the Three Divine Persons in the God-head, whom the Holy Scripture expressly teaches us to Adore with equal Adoration.

399. 'Tis like your Ladiship may think our Divine might have given more instances of matters of *mere Religion*; but you may please to remember, That he delights in being extreamly concise, considering no doubt that he addresses to Ladies, who are so taken up with those grand Affairs and Offices of Life, Dressing, Visiting, &c. together with the care of their *Health* and *Beauty*, the p. 29.

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p. 19, 20. constant *works of their Calling*, that they have little time to *Read or digest Volumes*, or to Retire and converse with their own Minds about matters of Religion! Tho' with submission to better Judgments, I will presume to say, that in a Country where all are permitted to search after Truth, there can hardly, if at all, be *Orthodoxy of Practice* without *Orthodoxy of Faith*, these being the two constituent parts of the *one thing Necessary*.

400. This Account of my Religion which I have given your Ladship, is not near so *short* as our Divine's is, because in my poor opinion, he omitted many Material and Fundamental *Reasons of Truths*. "And as no body can add *Christian*. "to the Fundamental Articles of Faith, p. 301. "nor make any other necessary but "what G O D himself has made and "declar'd to be so; In like manner no body can take from them. And tho' my Religion is not so *short* as what he prescribes to the Ladies, yet I hope it is *Plain and Practicable*. There are no *Sublime Notions or Mysteries Reasonings* in it; none of the *Notions and Language* that the Books and Disputes of Religion are fill'd with; Nor any thing but such *plain Propositions and short Reasonings about*

about things familiar to our Minds, as need not amaze any part of Mankind, no not the Day Labourers and Tradesmen, the Spinsters and Dairy Maids, who may very easily comprehend what a Woman cou'd write. A Woman who has not the least Reason to imagine that her Understanding is any better than the rest of her Sex's. All the difference, if there be any, arising only from her Application, her Disinterested and Unprejudic'd Love to Truth, and unwearied pursuit of it, notwithstanding all Discouragements, which is in every Womans power as well as in hers. And I assure you, Madam, she consulted no Divine, nor any other Man, scarce any Book except the Bible, on the Subject of this Letter, being willing to follow the thread of her own Thoughts.

401. And here your Ladiships trouble had ended, but that having read some *Sermons* (this *Christmas*, and whilst this Sheet was in the Press) concerning the *Divinity and Incarnation of our Blessed Saviour*, I cou'd not be unconcern'd when I found an Account of the Christian Dispensation so different from mine, given by so great an Author, so deservedly celebrated for his good Sense and just

Expression, the strength and clearness of his Reasoning, and his natural and unaffected Eloquence. I have endeavour'd *all along*, (as he says he has done) to take the *express declarations*, or at least the *pregnant intimations* of Scripture for my ground and guide, in handling this Argument, and I think those lively Oracles allow me to say, That the design of the Gospel, or of (a) the Grace of GOD offering Salvation to all Men, and of JESUS CHRIST in giving Himself for us, was to Redeem us from all Iniquity, (b) from our Vain Conversation, receiv'd by tradition from our Fathers; (c) To be a Light to the Gentiles, to open the blind Eyes, or the dark and perverted Understanding, as well as to make strait the crooked Will, and by this means to purify to Himself a peculiar People zealous of Good Works; in a word, to raise Human Nature to the utmost degree of Perfection of which it is capable, to make us (d) Perfect, as our Heavenly Father is Perfect. I likewise concluded from Holy Scripture, That the Method GOD thought fit to take to bring this to pass, was not by indulging or complying with us in the Prejudices we had fallen into thro' our adherence to Sense, which had alienated us from the Life of GOD, and which was the

(a) Tit.
2. 11, &c.

(b) 1 Pet.
4. 18.

(c) Isai. 42.
6. 7.
& 40. 4.

(d) Mat. 5.
ult.

the *main* Root and Source of the Wickedness of Mankind ; but by laying the *Ax* unto the (e) root of the Tree, by thoroughly (e) Mat. 3. purging His floor, and burning up the chaff^{10, 12.} with unquenchable fire. In short, by a full and perfect Reformation of the Principles and Manners of Mankind, by the Spotless and Exemplary Life and Death, and by the Pure and most Exalted Doctrine of His Holy SON, as has been shewn (I think) in the foregoing Pages. Nor was I able to discern, either from Scripture, or from our Natural Notions of GOD, any Reason why He was pleas'd to condescend so far as to send Rom. 8. His own Eternal SON in the Flesh, and 3. by making Him a Sacrifice for Sin, to condemn and punish Sin in the Human Nature, but only because *Infinite Wisdom* discern'd a *peculiar Wisdom and Fitness* in this *method* above all others, and saw not only a *great*, but even the greatest *congruity and fitness in the thing it self*, so that upon the matter, it was absolutely the best, and therefore the *only* way becoming the Divine Majesty. For, as I humbly apprehend, there is not a greater *boldness and presumption* than in affirming that GOD does any thing in vain, or That He wou'd have been at the expence of so costly, so precious a

D d 3 Sacrifice,

Sacrifice, if the *business* cou'd have been done without it.

* p. 146.
Edit. 3.

402. But the great Author just now mentioned, is it seems of another mind, for he tells us, That * *after all that has hitherto been said, (by which I suppose is to be understood, either before the Preaching of that Sermon, or else in the foregoing Sermons, in which he so clearly and fully, yet modestly proves the Divinity of our Lord) in answer to the Objections against GOD's way of Saving Mankind by JESUS CHRIST, it may still seem very strange to a considering Man, that GOD who cou'd without all this circumstance and condescension, have done the business for which His Son came into the World shou'd make choice of this way. Strange, not as this signifies Admirable and Wonderful, all GOD's Works and Ways, and this of Man's Redemption more especially, being strange in this Sense, for GOD's Thoughts are not as our Thoughts, nor His Ways as our Ways: But Strange as this imports Odd, and not easy to be accounted for. And therefore this most Learned and ingenious Person, thinks it (a) necessary to give some Account of this matter, to enquire into the Reasons of this Dispensation, and to assign them particularly if he can. And the only Reason given by so*
master.

masterly a Hand, (b) upon a due conside- (b) p. 149.
 ration is, (c) GOD's gracious compliance (c) p. 151.
 with the weakness and common prejudices of
 Mankind, especially of the Heathen World,
 (d) by accommodat[ing] the manner and cir- (d) p. 149.
 cumstances of this Dispensation to the most 150.
 common and deeply radicated Prejudices of
 Mankind concerning GOD and Religion,
 that so He might rectify more easily their (e) p. 151.
 wrong apprehensions by gratifying them in some
 measure. And he tells us that * it would * p. 147.
 be great boldness and presumption to affirm,
 That GOD cou'd not have brought about the
 Salvation of Men, by any other way, than
 by this very way in which He hath done
 it.

403. I am by no means fond of dis-
 senting from, much less of opposing the
 Opinion of a Man of so great and so e-
 stablish'd a Character, who whether or
 no he be in the Right, will certainly be
 said to be so by the most, who judge by
 Names and not by Reason. Nor will it
 seem a little invidious for one of no consi-
 deration to differ from so Eminent a Per-
 son, much more for a Woman to question,
 tho' ever so Modestly, the Authority of
 such a Great Man. And to me the
 greatest difficulty of all, is in starting
 any Objection against an Author when
 he has left the World, and therefore

can't explain and answer for himself, which is a misfortune I am already fallen into (with relation to Mr. L.) by these Papers being so long in the Press. But the Cause of GOD and of Religion will carry one thro' all Difficulties, and answer all Inconveniences. And the mischiefs of a blind adherence to Authority are so many and so great, and have occasion'd such a swarm of *Popish* Errors and Superstitions, that none who are zealous for the *Reformation*, can reasonably be offended at any one tho' ever so unnoted, who decently examines an opinion that comes recommended by ever so great a Name. Indeed, the greater the Name the more dangerous the Opinion if it is Erroneous; for Errors wou'd do little or no hurt, if it were not for the Veneration that is paid to the hand that recommends them. For my own part, I thank GOD, I am not considerable enough to countenance an Error, but I am much afraid of doing an Injury to Truth by appearing on her side; tho' all unprejudic'd Persons must needs allow, That a Proposition is not the less True for being offer'd by a Woman, or the more True for being deliver'd by the greatest Man. And whether or no I am in the Right, if I can but prevail with my Fellow-Christians,

Christians, to receive no Man's Opinion on his bare Word, nor to swallow his Arguments without examining them, I shall do no little Service to Mankind. And if any one will suppose that Vanity was the motive to this undertaking, they may hurt themselves but not me by such a Thought, so long as I know the contrary.

404. With all due Respect therefore to the Memory of that Great Man, I must beg leave to adhere to my own Account of the Christian Dispensation in opposition to his, and that for the following Reasons. *First*, Because his Account seems to me, not to make for the Honour of GOD and of the Christian Religion. A Dispensation of which such great and glorious things are spoken by the Sacred Writers, the *Method* and *Circumstances* of which were Prophecy'd of, very minutely, so long before, and which was usher'd into the World with so great Solemnity, not of Worldly Pomp and Parade, which is most (a) accommodated to the common and deeply radic- (a) p. 150.
ated Prejudices of Mankind, but with Demonstration of the Wisdom, the Power and Spirit of GOD. A (b) most Perfect In- (b) p. 149.
stitution, not only as to the Main and Substance of it, and as to it's being the Law
of

of Nature reviv'd and perfected; but most Perfect in all its Circumstances, Method, and Manner, for it is the (c) manifold Wisdom of GOD, according to the Eternal Purpose which He purposed in CHRIST JESUS our Lord. Eternal Purpose, and therefore, besides all other Reasons, this (d) Divine Counsel and Action must be taken from GOD Himself alone, and can't be assign'd to any Creature, or the Actions of any Creature, much less to the gross Prejudices of Men. It is a question whether a Wise Man wou'd contrive any great and momentous Work after the Model of Vulgar Prejudices; And I think it is out of question, that a compliance with Peoples Prejudices, is more like to continue than to cure them, at least it will not cure them effectually. For it is the blending Truth and Error, Good and Evil, that does the greatest mischief to Mankind; because were Error and Evil separated from all manner of Truth and Good, their deformity wou'd so much appear that they wou'd find no Followers. But we are told, That the Dispensation of GOD towards the Jewish Nation, was full of condescension to their Prejudices; and that the Religion and Laws which GOD gave them, were far from being the best and most Perfect in themselves.

It

It is not to be deny'd, that absolutely consider'd, the *Jewish* Religion was not the best, for it is not to be compar'd to the **Christian**: But then, upon the whole matter, it was most subservient to the Grand Design of the Almighty, even to the manifestation of His SON, and His Instituting a Religion absolutely Holy, Just, and Good. A Religion suitable to the Nature of GOD, who *is a Spirit*, and *will be Worshipped in Spirit and Truth* under this Dispensation, and not in ways accommodated to the Superstitions, the Prejudices, and gross Apprehensions of Mankind. And in this Sense, that is with relation to what was to follow, even the *Jewish* Religion was *Perfect*, as *David* tells us, and as might be made appear, but that it wou'd carry us too far. Nor did GOD at all comply with the reigning Prejudice of the *Jews*, when His SON appear'd in the World, whom they expected with all the Grandeur and Majesty of a Great Temporal Prince. At present let it be consider'd, how precarious and of how little value to any considering Person, that Institution must needs be, which takes its Rise from the *Prejudices of Mankind*, their (e) *gross and* (e) p. 150. *erroneous Notions*, and which can't otherwise be accounted for? How little it is for

* p. 153.
154.

|| p. 147.

* p. 146.

† p. 148.

for the Reputation of the Gospel Mysteries, or the Honour of their Divine Author, to have it said, that *since the World had such an Admiration for Mysteries, ---- * most of which were either very odd and phantastical, or very lewd and impure, or very inhumane and cruel, and every way unworthy of the Deity, therefore they shall have a Mystery indeed, a Mystery beyond all Dispute, and beyond all Comparison! Suppose Men had not been infected with these Prejudices, then according to this Account, there cou'd have been no sufficient Reason assign'd for the Gospel Dispensation, no Answer given to the Objections made against it, that cou'd remove the wonder of a considering Man? Or suppose the Reason assign'd is found to be weak, and unworthy the Divine Majesty? We are told indeed, That we ought to be || satisfy'd with the Wisdom and Fitness of the way GOD has been pleas'd to pitch upon, whether the particular Reasons appear to us or no. But we are also told that there is no absolute necessity for this very way, * GOD cou'd have done the business without it, to || affirm that He cou'd not, is said to be a great presumption and boldness; and that the † Reverence due to Mysteries and Miracles in Religion, is only where they are certain and necessary in the Nature*

Nature and Reason of the thing; but neither of them are easily to be admitted without necessity, and very good evidence. The Conclusions that follow from this Account are harder than I care to make, and therefore without further Remarks, I shall pass on to the Second Reason why I stick to my own, and can't submit to this Great Man's. And that is,

405. Because his Reason is not agreeable to the Account that is given of the Gospel Dispensation in Holy Scripture. For in those Sacred Pages, we have a most August Character of that great and glorious Dispensation, which is said to be (a) *the exceeding greatness of GOD's* (a) Eph. 1. 19. *Power, and (b) the exceeding Riches of His* & 2. 7. *Grace, wherein He hath abounded towards* (b) Eph. 1. 7, 8. *us in all Wisdom and Prudence. It is* (c) 1 Cor. 2. 7. *call'd (c) the Wisdom of GOD, and (d)* (d) Rom. 1. 16. *the Power of GOD unto Salvation; indeed* (e) Col. 2. 3. *all the Works and Ways of GOD are* (f) Eph. 3. 9. *made to centre in it, wherein (e) are hid* * *all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge.* * *from the beginning of the World, * from Ages and* * *Generations has been hid in GOD, and* 26, 27. *therefore did not, cou'd not take its Rise*
from

(g) Rev.
13. 8.
(b) 1 Pet
1. 20.

from *the Prejudices of Men* which are but of yesterday. Christ is called *the (g) Lamb slain from the Foundation of the World*, nay, He is said to be *(b) fore-ordin'd even before it's Foundation*. The *Messiah*, who being the Eternal SON of GOD was pleas'd to assume Human Nature, and by this means to become a *visible and sensible Diety*, and by making *Expiation for the Sins of Men*, and by suffering in their stead, to be their greatest *Benefactor*, and the *only Mediator between GOD and Sinful Men*, was promis'd to *Adam* immediately after the Fall, and therefore, as I p. 152, &c. humbly apprehend, none of the *Instances* given by our Great and Ingenious Author, do in the least make it appear, to any one who reads and considers the Holy Scripture, that GOD hath comply'd with the *Prejudices of Men*, in the *Dispensation of the Gospel*, or that the *Reasons* of it are at all deriv'd from the *common Notions of the Heathen World*.

406. As concerning *Expiation*, this great Person himself allows, That || *the Notion of the Expiation of Sin, by Sacrifices; seems to have obtain'd very early in the World*, — and to have had its *Original from the first Parents of Mankind*. And which is yet more, in another Sermon * he is pleas'd to assign the *Method and Dispensa-*

* Concern-
ing the
Sacrifice
and Satis-
faction of
Christ.
p. 205.

Dispensation which the Wisdom of GOD pitch'd upon for the Forgiveness of Sin, as the reason why GOD seems either to have possess'd Mankind with this Principle, or to have permitted them to be so perswaded, that Sin was not to be Expiated but by Blood. So that according to his own Reasoning, this Notion concerning Expiation can't well be call'd a Prejudice; much less can it be assign'd as the Reason why GOD so far comply'd, as once for all to have a general Atonement, unless we go in a circle, making this Method of a Sacrifice in the Sinners stead, and this Notion and Principle that without shedding of Blood there is no Remission, reciprocally the Reason for each other.

407. In the last place, That GOD shou'd Institute the Christian Religion in compliance with the gross apprehensions, and prejudices of Mankind, is not at all consistent with the Natural Notions we have of GOD. For that GOD does nothing in vain; and that He always does what is Best, Best in it's Kind tho' not always so in Degree, I take to be as evident Truths as any Axiom in the Mathematicks. GOD cannot Act but for the Wisest and Best End, that is for His own Glory, neither can He take the Reason of any of His Actions from without, much less,

p. 151.

p. 146,
147.

less, the Reason of this Glorious Dispensation, which is the chief of the Works of GOD, from so mean a Cause, to say no worse, as the *weak, and gross, and wrong apprehensions of Mankind*. Nor does this Great Man in reality, tho' he does in words, deny the *necessity* of the Christian Dispensation, or that GOD *cou'd have brought about the Salvation of Men by any other way*. For when we say that GOD cannot do a thing, we do not at all question Almighty Power, or *set any sort of limits to Infinite Wisdom*; we only question the fitness of the thing to be done, and mean no more than that such a thing is not suitable to the Perfection of the Divine Nature. For to say that GOD cannot Sin, that He can't Deceive nor be Deceiv'd, is no limitation of His Wisdom or Power, because to be capable of those were an Argument of Imperfection. And to do what is less Wise, or less Just, or Good, than something else that might be done in those Circumstances, is not consistent with the Nature of an All-Perfect Being, who because He is Infinite in all Perfection, always does what is Best. So that if this Great and Learned Divine, allows *the Divinity and Incarnation of our Blessed*

Blessed Saviour, and the Great Mystery of our Redemption, as I make no question but he does, having urg'd so many good Arguments against the *Arians* and *Socinians* in his Sermons, tho' he himself modestly calls his Arguments *Prejudices*, which if they were only *Prejudices*, wou'd not make any Man the more in the Right, but only render him the more unhappy by their being *Invincible*. If this Great Man, as I was saying, allows the *Truth* of the Mystery of our Redemption, he must allow the *Necessity* of it. Because if there was a *peculiar Wisdom and Fitness* in this Method, as he allows, then this *Wisdom and Fitness*, and not a *compliance with the Prejudices of Men*, determin'd GOD to Act thus, and was the true Reason why He cou'd not, the Perfection of His Nature consider'd, Act otherwise, or *do the business*, that is, effect the Salvation of Mankind, any other way.

408. But not to be farther tedious, I shall close all with the Words of our Dearest Lord, *Whosoever shall break one of the least of GOD's Commandments, and shall teach Men so, he shall be call'd the Least in the Kingdom of Heaven; But*

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whosoever shall Do and Teach them, the same shall be Great in the Kingdom of Heaven. With the Ambition of which true Grandeur may GOD inspire us all; to whom let us ascribe the Glory of every right Work, and in His due time HE will give us our Reward.

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